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CORRESPONDENCE

BERNIE'S GUN

To the editors:

There was enough elitist liberal blather in TNR's lead article of February 4 ("Bernhard Goetz's Gun") to sicken any normal citizen, even one who doesn't think of Bernhard Goetz as a hero. The essay could have been a parody of liberal thought concerning crime.

If only we had stricter gun controls, TNR laments, the whole sorry incident wouldn't have happened. We can be sure it would have ended differently, at least: the hoods would have Goetz's money and he would be the one in the hospital. The thugs who confronted Goetz have been caught 19 times committing various illegal acts, but still liberal sympathy lies in their favor. They "allegedly" had screwdrivers; Goetz "had no need to fire"; indeed, he should have been unarmed in the first place. This episode reinforces the feeling that our criminal justice system exists only for the purpose of getting criminals onto the streets as quickly and with as little inconvenience as possible; it's small wonder that some people finally realize that you'd better get your own justice, or you'll get none at all. This is why Bernard Goetz is a hero to many, and why most people, when they hear that a hoodlum is in a coma and near death, can only say, "Good."

DAVID J. BOSSERMAN
Libertyville, Illinois

HE'S ALL THERE

To the editors:

One could be predisposed to agree with Carl Bernstein about Ronald Reagan's incompetence and lack of knowledge ("Reagan at Reel II," TNR, February 4). The problem is that Bernstein's argument, as it unfolds, is entirely implausible. He cites persons unnamed, but directly quoted, and gives them cute titles such as "Counselor," "Aide," and "Congressional Leader." This reads like a work of fiction or, worse, a poor adaptation of the technique he and Bob Woodward developed much more satisfactorily during Watergate. Bernstein even goes so far as to identify Richard Nixon as a Reagan critic, which he may well be. But he gives no indication that he ever spoke to Nixon. He merely attributes his remarks to "his reported words." Reported to whom, by whom? Who ought to believe any of this?

JACK FRUCHTMAN
Towson, Maryland

LABOR OF LOVE?

To the editors:

I think L. W. is too kind in suggesting that the presence of young scholars and critics at the MLA convention attests to their "principled decision not to become a Yuppie" ("Washington Diarist," TNR, January 28). Let's not kid ourselves! Annual MLA conventions provide a cheap opportunity to claim some of the nicest perquisites of Yuppieness. You can get a room in a first-class hotel in New York, San Francisco, or Washington for less than half the customary price; MLA-chartered flights depart from almost every metropolitan airport; and best of all, universities still fund travel—even that of the most marginal participants in the business of the convention (e.g., job interviewers, panel chairs, and members of the Delegate Assembly—which deliberates mainly trivial matters of policy).

If this sounds cynical, consider the membership's response to the last annual convention held outside Yuppiedom—the 1980 Houston meeting. Attendance plummeted from 8,500 and 6,500 the two previous years to 4,500—the smallest turnout since the 1950s. Those who did attend complained bitterly about the dearth of posh restaurants and boutiques in the convention district. Don't expect to see these young scholars displaying their "socioeconomic courage" at a convention in Detroit or Cleveland.

CHRISTOPHER GOULD
Weatherford, Oklahoma

VOTE NOTE

To the editors:

David Osborne's otherwise thoughtful "Registration Boomerang" (TNR, February 25) misread data from the Committee for the Study of the American Electorate. Twelve million more citizens registered in 1984 than in 1980. It is not true, however, that only four million of them voted. Our study says that only four million of the new 12 million registrants can be attributed to the activities of registration groups across the political spectrum. What evidence exists suggests that new registrants voted at approximately the same rate as the rest of the electorate. This would mean significant increases in the voting rate of such historically low voting groups as blacks, people under 24 years of age, and fundamentalists.

CURTIS B. GANS
The Committee for the Study of the American Electorate
Washington, D. C.

CAPS OFF

To the editors:

Michael Rips's postcard ("Shower Cap Terror," TNR, February 4) compels me to offer clarification. Black men and women around the country wear plastic caps because of a chemical process that they use to loosen the natural tight curliness in their hair. The process is expensive and time-consuming, but popular because it offers more versatility and ease in styling. However, the chemical change leaves the hair extremely dry and brittle, making it necessary to use a special moisturizer—usually in conjunction with a plastic cap.

The public wearing of the plastic caps seems to be regional. The style is rarely seen in Washington, D.C., but quite common in Cleveland, Detroit, Chicago, and, I guess, Shreveport. I liken it to the stocking caps men wore in the fifties or the silk head scarves of the early sixties. People uncover their heads to show off their crowning glory only when they think the occasion demands. I realize that your postcard was meant to be humorous, but as I read it I had visions of some isolated white people turning to their friends and saying, "Gee, Sally, those blacks have come up with a new form of social protest!" Blacks may indeed have new forms of social protest, but plastic caps aren't it.

LYNNE K. ADRINE
Silver Spring, Maryland

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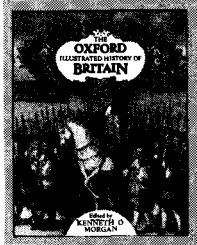

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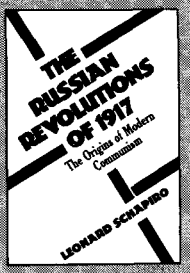

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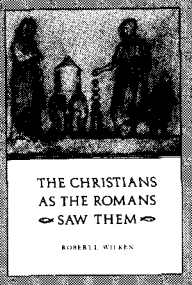

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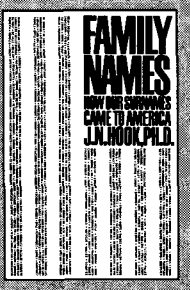

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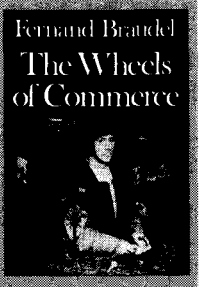

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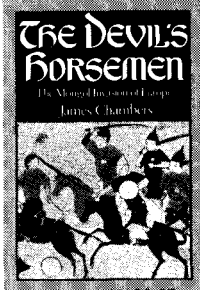

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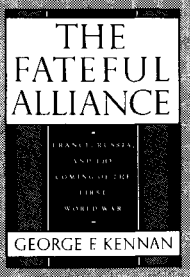

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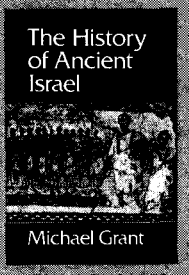

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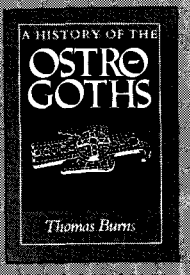

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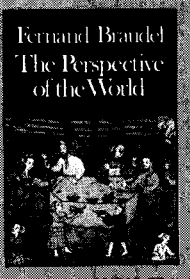

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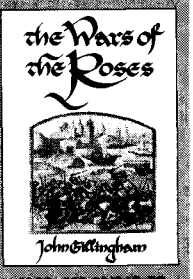

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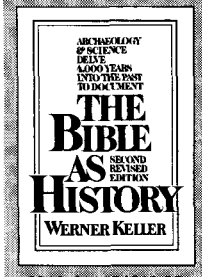
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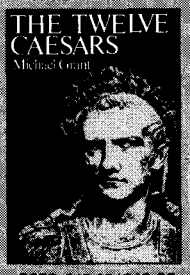

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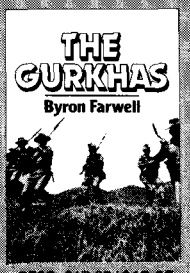

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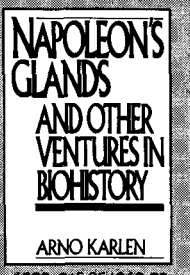

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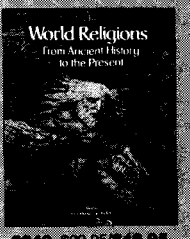

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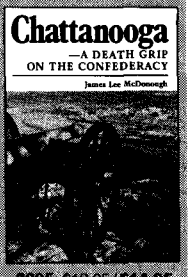

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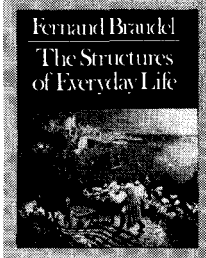

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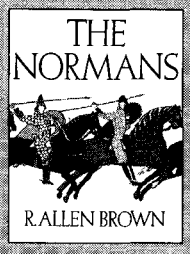

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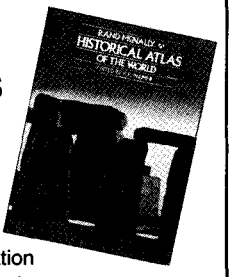

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FROM WASHINGTON

STARSHIP ENTERPRISE

"Enterprise zones"—the notion of giving special breaks from taxes and regulation to businesses in economically depressed areas—have all the makings of that politicians' delight, a "new idea." They appeal to conservatives as a way of getting the government off the backs of the people. They appeal to liberals as a way of helping the desperate inner city. They have just the gimmicky "high-tech" flavor preferred by both Opportunity Republicans and Atari Democrats. These "new generation" wings of the two parties like approaches to social problems that work through the private sector instead of through government agencies.

President Reagan has made enterprise zones his only domestic policy initiative apart from budget cuts. They are a cornerstone of Representative Jack Kemp's incipient presidential campaign. But even Walter Mondale casually endorsed the idea in one of the presidential debates. It pops up in seminar rooms around the world where Democrats have retired to "rethink." An enterprise zones bill has passed the Senate two years in a row, only to die in the House, primarily because of strong opposition from the unions. For once the unions are right.

The bill endorsed by Reagan would authorize the secretary of housing and urban development to anoint 75 areas of high unemployment, poverty, and population loss as "enterprize zones." Businesses that open or expand in an enterprize zone would get: a 100 percent tax exemption on any profit when they sell the business; a special tax credit of up to ten percent of the cost of their investment; a credit of up to ten percent of their additional wage bill; another credit of up to *50 percent* of the wages of employees who live in the zone; a five percent earned income credit for those employees; the right to raise unlimited funds through tax-free "industrial revenue bonds"; freedom from sundry regulations; and—last but not least—an all-expense-paid dream vacation for two at the beautiful MGM Grand Hotel in fabulous *LAS VEGAS, NEVADA!!!* Only kidding about the vacation. But the rest is for real.

Consider, to start with, the question of regulation. The bill guarantees that major federal regulations protecting equal employment opportunity, worker health and safety, the environment, and the minimum wage will remain in force. These, presumably, are too important to tamper with. But all regulations are either wise or foolish. Kemp says enterprise zone businesses should get a "streamline[d] business permit system." If the system can be streamlined, why limit it to a "zone"? On the other hand, as an Urban Institute study put it, "The first life-taking collapse of a below-standard building within a zone, or the first case of food poisoning in an uninspected restaurant . . . and deregulation will prove impossible to pursue very far."

People have many reasons for not opening shop in the South Bronx, but this bill will only affect their economic calculation. Who is going to be most easily tempted? Clearly the most likely candidates will be drawn away from nearby areas that are almost or equally as squalid and depressed, but lack the "enterprise zone" certification. Next most likely are businesses that are now operating or would otherwise open in some safer or more prosperous area. Genuinely new businesses or business expansions—that is, projects that currently aren't economically appealing at *any* location—are the least likely to suddenly sprout up in the South Bronx because of tax incentives.

Every study of the decades-old investment tax credit has shown that the government loses more revenue with this "incentive" than the value of all the new investment it generates. This is because most of the investment that gets the credit would have occurred anyway. I predict that a study of "enterprise zones" after a few years will show the same thing. Even as it stands, the proposal is a bad bargain.

But the "enterprise zones" system, once enacted, will never remain as it stands. Any attempt to draw a bright line through society and offer some enormous benefit to people on one side is inherently politically unstable. And rightly so, because it is inherently unfair. Are we really going to give these huge breaks to a dry cleaner that opens in the South Bronx and deny them to a competing dry cleaner that has been there all along? Are we really going to make the guy who was hired the day before his neighborhood became a "zone" pay more taxes year after year than the guy who was hired the day after?

There is no way this experiment can be limited to the country's 75 most depressed neighborhoods. The current legislation specifies that a third of the "enterprize zones" must be in rural areas, and you can be assured there will be at least one in every state. When a neighborhood becomes an "enterprise zone" and another one nearby doesn't, the definition of a "zone" will be expanded or new zones will be added. There is already talk on Capitol Hill of starting with more than 75 zones, in order to help get the bill passed. This is just what happened with LBJ's Model Cities program, which began as a focused experiment in urban renewal and ended up as a revenue-sharing free-for-all.

When lawyers and bankers get through, the "enterprise zone" cornucopia will be disgorging goodies Congress never dreamed of. The established business that wasn't supposed to qualify for breaks will close and re-incorporate. Presto. Corporations will figure out ways to funnel assets through "enterprise zones" for the tax advantages without doing the locals any good. "Enterprise zone" benefits will become part of the standard "incentive" package all cities must offer all businesses, just like the ludicrous tax-exempt "industrial revenue bonds" we have now.

The conservatives who usually can be depended upon to point out the slippery-slope nature of government programs are among the biggest cheerleaders for "enterprise zones." The suspicion has to be that this is one slippery slope they don't mind being on. Principled conservatives see "enterprise zones" as the opening wedge of the minimal state. Unprincipled ones just want corporations unchained, and don't care why or how. "Enterprise zones" are not a new idea at all. It's the same old one.

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

MARCH 11, 1985

THREE MIDDLE EAST FANTASIES

American diplomacy in the Middle East goes blindly from hope to frustrated hope, incapable of learning from its frustrations. Once again in recent weeks, in three related circumstances, the mystical reading of entrails has taken the place of sound and skeptical analysis.

Case number one is the craven propitiating of Syria, in misplaced gratitude for the release of Jeremy Levin, the former Cable News Network correspondent in Beirut. Levin was one of the five all-but-forgotten American hostages in Lebanon. After almost a year, he managed to give his extremist Shiite captors the slip. Wandering for several hours in Baalbek, an Islamic fundamentalist stronghold in the Syrian-occupied Bekaa valley, Levin encountered a Syrian army unit that transferred him to Damascus. The Syrian authorities, eager for another cheap propaganda victory like that which followed the release of Lieutenant Robert Goodman, shipped him home. Within hours the ambulance chaser of international terrorism, Jesse Jackson, who had exactly zero to do with these events, was holding a press conference to declare that this was another sign of Syria's peaceful intentions. State Department spokesmen mouthed similar banalities. Soon this was received opinion among much of the press.

But why is gratitude in order? The Syrians are still accomplices in the continued detention of four other Americans, including a diplomat. And they were accomplices as well in a terrorist attack against the American Embassy in Beirut last September.

Of course hypocrisy is the fuel of diplomacy. A friendly word to Syria might be justified as a way of encouraging the talks that are now said to be underway once again for an Arab-Israeli settlement. But the sudden outbreak of talk about "progress" and "breakthroughs" and "milestones" is the second case of mystical sign-reading substituting for skeptical analysis.

The basis of all this optimistic buzz was a sparse official communique from Amman reporting that King Hussein and Yasir Arafat had discussed over one "working lunch" the "reality of the Palestine issue in the occupied territory and in the international arena." *The Washington Post* dubbed these almost meaningless words a "pact"—no less!—between Jordan and Arafat's Palestine Liberation Organization, a pact apparently substantial enough to "buoy" the United States.

There is no cause for buoyancy. We still know no details about what actually passed between these two habitual antagonists who are driven together this time by their common enemy, Syria's tyrant, Hafez Assad. Jordanian and Palestinian emissaries were dispatched to other Arab capitals to reassure that the traditional rejection-front has not been broken.

This intelligence tends to confirm the impression that Arafat's lunch with Hussein was merely a piece of political theater contrived to pressure the United States to pressure Israel into unilateral concessions without, or at least long in advance of, any serious talks. We have been here before, and more than once. In fact, the current Hussein-Arafat scenario is an exact replay of one that excited the commentators less than two years ago. Then, as now, we were told that Arafat had finally sanctioned Hussein's role as prime negotiating partner with Israel. It was a mirage in 1983, and it probably will be a mirage again.

Which Arab chieftain is the most supremely irrelevant figure in the Middle East equation? For years we have argued in these pages that the undisputed winner of these dubious stakes was the king of Saudi Arabia, the modern version of the emperor in Hans Christian Andersen's famous story. The more extortion money the king paid out, the more his beneficiaries ignored him, while Western diplomats insisted that his good offices were the key to peace, the key, in fact, to everything. The Saudis never translated economic power into political power, as the failure of their many mediation efforts among Arabs has shown.

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But straitened circumstances have diminished the Saudis' frantic largess to allies and adversaries alike. Except for a residual fan club of flat-earthers in Washington who still believe that OPEC is alive and well, nobody even bothers to pretend much anymore that King Fahd's opinion matters. Therefore it's time to name a new winner of the supreme irrelevancy award. Clearly, Yasir Arafat is our man.

Arafat's only power is the power to incite the various Palestinian expatriate communities to disrupt their host Arab societies. The volatile street is the ultimate forum of Arab politics. Arafat's power is, then, the power of the mob. To be sure, this power is not trivial, especially from the perspective of kings like Hussein and Fahd who rule states that aren't remotely nations, and whose crowns rest precariously on a body politic of contingent disloyalty. In 1958 Hussein's cousin in Baghdad, also a king, got a bullet in his heart from just such a mob, summoned into the streets by someone far away.

Yet Arafat is powerless to unseat his chief nemesis, President Assad of Syria, his rival in the theory and practice of Arab irredentism against Israel. And even if Arafat traveled far enough on the road from Damascus to undergo a genuine conversion to a more moderate view of Palestinian destiny, he would be powerless to guarantee its sway even among his own legions. The very day after his ostensibly historic lunch with Hussein, two of Arafat's top lieutenants denied in Tunis that any serious deal was made, and repudiated the deal anyway, whatever it was.

Given this reality, why should, moreover, Israel yield some territory to an Arafat, only to find its civilian population vulnerable to Palestinian ultras, under Syrian dominion, who would see the acceptance of Israel's concessions as a betrayal, an excuse for even more desperate terrorism? Arafat is between a rock and a hard place. He is being asked to validate the Jordanian claim to a part of historic Palestine, all of which he thinks of as his patrimony. So do the other soldiers of Palestine, including those who now struggle under Syrian discipline.

There is no real incentive for Arafat to give his proxy to King Hussein. (And Hussein knows that Arafat would be scheming against him from the very day parts of the West Bank were restored to Jordan.) Yet Arafat has already exhausted his other alternative, that of armed struggle, and it has landed him an unwelcome guest in Tunis, farther away than ever from what he and his friends defiantly still call Palestine. The psychological disaster this fantasy has caused his people is almost beyond reckoning. From the distance, Arafat can still rouse the exiles to fervor. But he can do nothing concrete for them, and nothing for their cousins in the occupied territories either. To give Arafat veto power over who negotiates and how is to make a settlement hostage to a dangerously weak man.

ARAFAT'S VETO is the fig leaf for every other Arab leader's cowardice, including Hussein and Fahd. The reaction to Fahd's recent visit to Washington is the third case where mysticism has replaced analysis in American thinking about the Mideast. This visit also stirred much talk of diplomatic motion and new beginnings. The only basis was Fahd's dredging up of his 1982 Fez "peace plan." Although this plan was thought radical by some Arabs, it does not so much as mention the word Israel. It does call for all the captured territories to be turned into a Palestinian state under PLO aegis with Jerusalem as its capital. Some deal. It is no favor to the Arab nations to let them think that these provisions command realistic sympathy in the United States. Yet that's exactly what happened on the king's visit.

LOOK AT Fahd's record. He promised and failed to deliver support for Camp David. In fact, he did exactly the opposite and put Egypt in an interdict from which it is just beginning to emerge. The Saudis did not get the Syrians out of Lebanon. The Saudis did not bring Jordan to the conference table. The Saudis, in fact, have done nothing they promised—and one reason is that they couldn't possibly do so. And yet the king comes to visit and faults us for not living up to our part of bargains for which his role was a prerequisite.

The king's nephew Prince Bandar, the Saudi ambassador to Washington, has now flown off to Damascus to beg Assad to join, or at least to permit, peace talks. But what have we told Fahd that encourages him to have Bandar try to encourage Assad? One disturbing sign is the response to the freeing of Jeremy Levin. From his ranch in California, President Reagan called Assad to thank him for Syria's beneficent deed of not returning Levin to his captors.

It must have been a strange conversation, this dialogue between the American president and the man ultimately responsible for the murder of hundreds of Americans in Beirut. Will this one tiny favor from Syria (or even the freeing of the other hostages, which may be in the offing because such gestures are amply rewarded) lead us to thank Assad in the concrete and very expensive currency of regional security? This would be a betrayal not only of Israel, but also of Jordan and Egypt.

A foreign policy geared primarily to securing the release of hostages or expressing thanks for their freedom is no foreign policy at all. It will show our adversaries everywhere how to extract concessions from the United States that would otherwise be inconceivable. How ironic it would be if President Reagan were to behave toward Syria exactly the way candidate Reagan accused President Carter of behaving toward Iran.

The odds are that none of this will happen because this Arab "peace initiative," like previous ones, will break up quickly on the rocks of intra-Arab conflict. A real opening from the Arabs would be an occasion for some American investment of effort and prestige. But only a real opening is worth the investment, because there is not much American prestige left to waste.

Certainly this would be the time, if ever, for a serious gesture from Israel's neighbors. For two and a half years, there was the excuse of an Israeli occupation army

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in Lebanon. Now that is coming to an end. Moreover, there is now a government in Jerusalem that is committed—albeit by the tiniest margin—to concrete concessions for peace, even concrete concessions for less than full peace.

But let's be clear what these concessions will *not* be. After 18 years there will be no return to the status quo ante. The Arab prophecy of Israeli expansionism has been self-fulfilling. By refusing for so long to come to the conference table, both Jordan and the Palestinian Arabs forswore the one strategy that might have prevented Jewish settlement on the West Bank: negotiations for peace. No one should take the Israeli withdrawal from Southern Lebanon under pressure of terrorism as a precedent for how to get Israel to withdraw from the West Bank. Israel's stakes and ties there are far different.

IT IS SIMPLY too late to insert another sovereign state in the tiny territory between Jordan and Israel, with its by now quite complex demography. This statement may seem to violate some ideal of self-determination. But that is an ideal realized nowhere in the Arab Middle East, and it is hypocrisy to insist that it be instituted for the first time at the price of Israel's security. Like nationhood, citizenship in the Middle East, as in much of the Third World, is not what it is in the West. Not many rights attach to citizenship in the Arab world. The West Bankers, Jews, and Arabs, may be destined to a certain ambiguity in their political lives. Autonomy or, more likely, some form of mixed sovereignty (with some separate functions and some joint functions) between Jordan and Israel may provide greater stability, security, and freedom to the inhabitants of the area than the sterile political formulae of distinct statehoods. But there will be no settlement of any sort without talks that include Jordan, Israel, representatives from the territories, and also Egypt. Egypt not only has ties to Gaza and the Gazans, but it is the one Arab country with a palpable stake in the progress its neighbors make toward peace.

By contrast, the one kind of conference that will never work is a big international gathering with Israel, all the Arabs, and all of the big powers in attendance. This is the kind of assembly desired by all those who prefer the politics of condemnation to hard bargaining. It is the kind of assembly doomed to failure, magnifying the already enormous differences among the Arabs, rather than narrowing the particular differences between Israel and the relevant individual Arab parties. (How could all the Arabs together possibly talk to Israel when they can hardly talk to each other?) Moreover, such a conference would give needless influence to the Russians and the Chinese, who don't even have diplomatic relations with Israel and who will rightly be seen as part of a gang-up. They simply have no standing.

For years such an international conference was the reflexive Middle East solution of the European Economic Community. Apparently, it is that no longer. Maybe if people finally stop diverting the Arabs with the prospect of false forums and implausible victories, some of them will finally face reality (as Egypt did) and win for themselves (as the Egyptians did) concessions that will even make it worthwhile to put an end to their nearly 40 years' war against the Jews.

NOTEBOOK

□ "NIGHT OF 100 STARS" it was called, but according to Enid Nemy in *The New York Times* this charity fund-raiser to build a nursing home for retired actors actually involved "some 300 stars of varying degrees of brilliance." In a nice demonstration of the economics of celebrity charity, the extravaganza raised a million dollars for the nursing home at a cost of only $5.5 million. "Each star received a hand-delivered bottle of champagne and a Mark Cross leather wallet. Each wallet contained two first-class airline tickets—one for the star, the other for a companion. . . ." Other expenses included limousine service; champagne, flowers, fruit, candy, and (even) books in every hotel room; "breakfast, brunch, lunch, tea, and dinner" at the "21" Club; "a pre-show cocktail party for 1,500 guests in the Exxon Building, an early buffet dinner for 500 in the Rainbow Room and an after-theater supper for 2,300 at the Hilton." And, "Rehearsal hours were made more pleasant by a 300-pound box of Perugina chocolates, which was laid over the orchestra seats for quick-energy snacks." The entire cost, of course, was tax-deductible, either as a charitable contribution or a business expense. If the government had simply built the nursing home free of charge, the taxpayers would have been about two million dollars better off.

□ THE FAIRNESS DOCTRINE is a 36-year-old policy of the Federal Communications Commission requiring radio and television broadcasters, in a vague sort of way, to give all sides of any controversy they discuss. In the spirit of deregulation, the current FCC Chairman, Mark Fowler, wants to repeal the fairness doctrine. He argues that with the explosion of new media, artificial attempts at "balance" are no longer needed. Although advocacy groups across the political spectrum—from Phyllis Schlafly to the ACLU—have rushed to the defense of the fairness doctrine, we tend to sympathize with Fowler's view. We suspect that the main effect of the fairness doctrine is to make television less interesting, as broadcasters avoid controversial topics rather than having to worry about it. However, if television is to be brought into the world of free-market capitalism, shouldn't broadcasters have to give up their benefits as well as their burdens? Since the beginning, the government has given away television licenses—claims on scarce broadcasting frequencies—free as air. They later change hands for hundreds of millions of dollars. Broadcast licenses should be auctioned off every few years. Then let the buyers say whatever they want.

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THE PRESS

PORK QUOTES

THIS IS the time of year that I'm usually in hog heaven. It's "pork quote" time in Washington. "Pork quote" is my phylum name for the various dramatic and earthy statements that members of Congress and their Executive Branch foes use to express outrage and to increase their chances of emerging from the daily outrage babble by getting quoted in the next day's papers. Of course, pork quotes aren't used only in Washington; many of the greatest pork-quoters practice their craft in state legislatures. Nor must they always be about hogs or pork. I call them pork quotes only to honor the most popular and revered of the many stock images that officials draw upon when constructing these statements: the "pork barrel," which has been with us since at least the mid-1800s.

The best place to find pork quotes is *The Washington Post*, which seems to love the "punch" these quotes add to a story. So do *Time*, *Newsweek*, and the wires, but not *The New York Times*, which, to its discredit, does not normally use them.

Strictly speaking, it is not yet the season for "hog and pork" pork quotes. Those usually come at the end of the fiscal or calendar year, when the congressional chickens—bearing "the bacon" or "Christmas tree ornaments"—go home to roost. Before then, when the hog is still being chased around the barnyard, you'll start to see quotes like Senator Dale Bumpers's 1981 pork-quote classic: "There is not a member of this body who has not supped at the trough of fiscal irresponsibility." Or descriptions like the one in a Scripps news story whose author wondered if the "Senator/cabinet officer" team of Robert and Elizabeth Dole would become "a Kansas pork-barrel factory run on government dollars." Or exchanges like this one from a March 1983 *Post* story about a $4.9 billion "public jobs and unemployment aid" bill. First, an "unnamed Republican" called it "frenzied feeding at the public trough." Then Representative Robert S. Walker declared: "It is more about pork than it is about jobs." Then Representative Silvio Conte said that the only members who got anything from this bill were "those who were in the butcher shop when the hog was slaughtered." No, countered Majority Leader Jim Wright, "This is bread and butter. It is not pork."

I flatly reject the argument that pork quotes are "bad journalism" because they take up a lot of space, are usually confusing, and almost never "add useful information" to a story. People who say that are just trying to rain on my trial balloon. Pork quotes help me keep up with current events. Without them, I'm afraid I probably wouldn't even read most of the long, gray, and dull stories on the budget, the deficit, tax policy, Social Security, and farm credit. But I do, and I read them all the way through, because . . . you just never know.

Take February 5, 1985. I am snoozing my way through a *Post* story on the administration's proposal to end the government's tobacco-support program. I'm about to give up. Then, out of nowhere, Representative Larry J. Hopkins—a rising pork-quote shoat from the Kentucky state legislature—says: "If Secretary Block continues to insist that tobacco kneel down and die at the altar of program consistency, then he is destined to become the Jim Jones cult figure of American agriculture." This is a beautiful pork quote, combining the classic cadences of William Jennings Bryan ("You shall not press down upon the brow of labor . . .") with the jarring, violent imagery of George Wallace (who once said that a certain federal judge should be administered "a political barbed-wire enema"). What remains to be seen is whether it will achieve pork-quote immortality by making "Jonestown" part of the select group of things that are consistently called up to serve pork-quote duty—that is, can we expect other representatives to start talking about such things as "deficit Kool-Aid"? Personally, I doubt it. I won't say pork quotes require "class," but there may be limits.

Anyway, these "historical figure" pork quotes have, historically, tended to be one-shot. In a September 1981 story about the Democratic leadership's "truce" with the "Boll Weevils," House Majority leader Jim Wright denied that the leadership planned to punish the Weevils by taking away choice committee assignments. "Nobody's going to be Joan of Arc out there unless he lights his own torch to his own funeral pyre," he explained. Great, but Joan never really "caught on," so to speak. I predict the same fate for Senator Mark Andrews's February 6 comment that David Stockman, by "denouncing" farm credit, was "practicing a Marie Antoinette economics that is totally nonproductive for our nation's economy."

ALONG WITH PORK, the other half of pork-quoting's Big Two is "the Band-Aid" ("the Bandage" in pre-Sheer Strip times), meaning "short-term solution." Representative Tony Coelho, referring to the rift between right-wing and moderate Republicans, recently called President Reagan "a very attractive Band-Aid over a festering wound." A lobbyist for Mothers Against Drunk Driving once called a Maryland drinking-age bill "a step—somewhere between a Band-Aid and a tourniquet." On February 2 Senate Majority leader Bob Dole called the administration's farm proposal "a Band-Aid, not a solution." Building on this, Iowa senator Tom Harkin said: "This crisis is not going to go away with the kind of Band-Aid and pabulum we're getting from David Stockman." Someone should try prairie-fire salve.

Other images often called into service include:

"Sacred" Cows and "Gored" Oxen: Representative Dick Cheney recently said: "There are people here who feel they have a bigger stake in some of these 'sacred cows' than the president does. They helped breed them." Representative Mickey Edwards, commenting on Reagan's 1981 budget and tax proposals, said: "Everyone whose ox has been gored is going to be squealing." Like many of the best pork quotes, this one is hopelessly mixed up.

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"Squealing" is obviously an import from "pork" pork quotes. And why is "everyone" squealing? What about the poor ox? He's the one who got gored.

Shipping and Seafaring: In these quotes, people are always jumping ship, shipping out ("Mr. President, everyone is off the reservation—you'd better shape up or we'll ship out—on our own"), weathering a "sea change" ("The ship is afloat, it's just in the hollow of the wave and riding out for the next curve"), throwing somebody overboard, jettisoning political cargo, rearranging deck chairs (usually on the *Titanic*), "drowning in a sea of red ink," or firing "warning shots" across other people's bows, as in this fine quote by Senator James A. McClure: "I would have thought if people were worried about presidential intransigence they would have fired a warning shot across the bow [of the Reagan administration ship]. But maybe too many of them were worried about their aim—that they might have hit."

Warfare, Mayhem, and Torture: "The trenches have been dug. If they persist in this, then it's war." "It is time to get out the sabres and charge." "If [Jeane Kirkpatrick] tries to carve out an empire of her own, she'll find herself in the ultimate tong war." "There is a savage crossfire between the President and Congress." "No one wants to get out front [on a budget compromise] and get shot in the back." "Do we want to make these political kamikaze raids and get vetoed?" "[Transportation Secretary Drew] Lewis has a very delicate situation out there. If he gets too far out front, the President could chop him off at the knees." In addition, people are always "dodging bullets"; having their "political hides" tanned, flailed, or skinned; masochistically setting their own feet in concrete, only to have others bang away at them with pick axes; being "dragooned or bludgeoned"; or "crawling out on a limb [of budget compromise]" while someone else saws it off. Sometimes these quotes become very gruesome. In a March 1982 *Post* story in which a group of freshman House Republicans accused the Democrats of "delay" and threatened "procedural warfare" if "action" on the budget did not occur soon, Representative Joe Skeen said, "We're not going to sit here like worms and wait for the seagulls to come in." President Reagan, an accomplished pork-quoter, recently said that the Polish government "doesn't mind throwing somebody to the wolves in order to keep the sleigh going ahead of the wolf pack." Claude Pepper, denouncing a Reagan proposal to cut Medicare and Medicaid, once said: "[These proposals] constitute a kind of Chinese water torture—drop after drop after drop until"—*what?*—"the overall burden becomes too much for the elderly to bear."

PHOTO BY MICHAEL HABICHT/ANIMALS ANIMALS

The vivid pork-quote vocabulary is made up of these and many other graphic images that move in and out of fashion—"draft dodging in the all-out war on the deficit"; playing "deficit Rip Van Winkle"; keeping one's cards close to one's vest and "playing poker with sticks of dynamite"; playing "budget chicken"; letting the wolf count the chickens or counting said chickens before they're hatched; being a "budget Chicken Little"; cooking "deficit soup" in a kitchen full of smoke, mirrors, and handwringers; taking a "tortoise and hare approach"; "throwing the baby [needed social programs] out with the bathwater [expendable social programs]"; getting one's ducks in a row; watching one's ducks fly off in many different directions; tossing "darts" at the Constitution (or treading on it/mocking it/laying rubber on it); driving a freight train to a head-on collision; sticking one's head "in the sand"; building "walls without windows"; waiting for the fat lady to sing; bypassing "stalled [budget compromise] caravans"; and, always, always, "tightening the noose around the neck of the federal worker."

Pork quotes are a national treasure. And, though I'm quite excited about younger porkers like Representative Hopkins, I'm also worried that these richly textured quotes may one day go the way of the family farm and the good one-dollar bowl of chili. The situation is not yet critical, but so far this year's season has been "just O.K.," and compared to the Golden Age of Pork Quotes—March 1982—the pickings have been scanty and juiceless. Those were the days. Every year I take a six-pack to the Library of Congress microfilm reading room and relive them. Not only were Reagan and the Tipster slugging it out over the budget, but there were several histrionic days of the "Senate trial" of Abscam defendant Harrison Williams.

March 2: Senator Williams's wife says the Abscam investigation of her husband is "like raping Alice in Wonderland."

March 11: Senator David Pryor says that Williams was "washed up on our shores with both arms broken and both legs broken. And now we are asked to cut off his head and rip out his heart. It is not an easy moment for the Senate."

March 12: Senator Ted Stevens, who was sympathetic to Williams's entrapment argument, tries to argue that the same thing could happen to any senator by saying, "You

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do not send an undercover agent into a coffee after church to see if he can sell heroin."

March 11: (Not equaled before or since.) Senator John Melcher says, "I am not ready to rule for expulsion because I am not sure of all the facts. I will not board a railroad train to a due-process holocaust."

ALEX HEARD

Alex Heard is a draft dodger in the war on mixed metaphors.

The paradox of the Popieluszko case.

TRIAL AND TERROR

A BASIC RULE of totalitarian society is that you're not supposed to know who *they* are until it's too late. This rule is what makes the recent trial in Poland such an extraordinary event. During the past month, the entire Polish nation has seen four members of the secret police openly tried and convicted for the murder of Father Jerzy Popieluszko. They have seen the Polish government expose its own secret police apparatus as a collection of cheap thugs.

Of course, the government tried to stage-manage the trial from beginning to end. How else to explain the television cameras broadcasting directly from the courtroom in Toruń to the Central Committee building in Warsaw, the flagrant censoring of the trial transcript, the prosecution's ridiculous insistence that the murderers acted without orders from their superiors, or the timely death of two investigators in a car crash on November 30? But this is not the point. Few people, inside Poland or out, believe that the trial revealed the whole truth about Father Popieluszko's death. What matters is that it happened at all, and that the Polish people saw it enacted on television, in the newspapers, and in half-hour radio broadcasts every night. For the Polish authorities, this trial was not, as some have claimed, a public relations victory. Rather, the government accepted a serious setback in the hope of preventing a disastrous one.

Despite the lies, the trial put quite a few things on the record concerning the defenders of public order and real socialism in Poland. It was revealed, for instance, that on September 20, 1984, Colonel Adam Pietruszka and Captain Grzegorz Piotrowski of the Ministry of the Interior (each sentenced to 25-year terms) talked about how to get rid of Father Popieluszko once and for all. Maybe he should have a "nice traffic accident," they speculated, or "a good beating" that would "shake him to the edge of a heart attack." If it pushed him over the edge, it would just be "plain bad luck that he had so weak a heart." It came out that the four defendants had planned to set Father Popieluszko's car on fire, and to throw a hand grenade through the window of his chapel. Six days before the abduction and murder, Captain Piotrowski (who, ironically, served as bodyguard to Pope John Paul II during his visit to Poland in 1983) threw a stone at the windshield of Father Popieluszko's car to cause a crash. Lieutenant Leszek Pekala even wanted to sell the car for a profit. Under questioning, Captain Piotrowski delivered this hardly repentant confession: "We did something illogical."

The prosecution claimed that this sort of cynical thuggery was characteristic only of the four men on trial, not of the regime they served. But presiding magistrate Artur Kujawa proved just the opposite with his clumsy attempts to place Father Popieluszko and the Roman Catholic Church in the dock alongside the defendants. The Church provoked the assassination with its "extremism," Kujawa maintained, and Popieluszko resembled his killers in "thinking he could place himself above the law."

Actually, it is General Jaruzelski who has most conspicuously put himself "above the law" in Poland during the past few years, with the imposition of martial law on December 13, 1981. His "state of siege" marked the most recent attempt to fit Poland into the Soviet model for Eastern Europe: dependable states marked by identically servile populations. The trial is the clearest sign yet that this attempt has failed, and that Poland still preserves its unique identity within the Eastern bloc.

Poland has the strongest national and cultural traditions in the region. It preserved its independence long after its fragmented neighbors had fallen under Austrian and Turkish domination, and it has nearly twice as many people as any other satellite nation. Because of this heritage, the Poles have resisted "Sovietization" better than their neighbors. And time after time Poland's frustrated Communist leaders have felt compelled to yield partway to popular demands. This was the case in 1970, when food riots toppled party chief Wladyslaw Gomulka, and in 1980-81, when Solidarity was formed and briefly flourished. Most important, it has been the case throughout the postwar period, in the remarkable degree of autonomy enjoyed by the Roman Catholic Church. In neighboring Lithuania and Latvia, by contrast, the Soviet authorities have acted brutally to repress Catholicism. According to the German newsweekly *Der Spiegel*, one outspoken Lithuanian priest was found dead in October 1980 with crushed knuckles, burn wounds, and torn-out fingernails. There was no investigation, and no trial.

The trial of Father Popieluszko's murderers shows that once again the Polish government has been forced to make a concession to its people. No one outside the government considers the concession satisfactory, but for General Jaruzelski to make it at all shows that his brutal attempt to eradicate Polish society's capacity for resistance has not yet succeeded. The trial was unfair, incomplete, and in large part a lie. But for the Polish people it was also—such are the paradoxes of totalitarianism—a victory.

DAVID A. BELL

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Democracy gets pushed around in Seoul.

OUR CHUM CHUN

THE FUSS about the Korean National Guards' rough treatment of opposition leader Kim Dae Jung and his American escorts at the Seoul airport obscured the larger story in South Korea: the present sorry state of political and human rights under the Chun Doo Hwan regime. President Reagan recently declared that "their democracy is working." But two reports released this month—including one from the State Department—draw a different conclusion.

South Korea doesn't go in for death squads and officially sanctioned disappearances; instead, a more refined form of repression flourishes. In the words of a report prepared by the International League for Human Rights and the International Human Rights Law Group, "The Chun regime has asserted a subtle, systematic, and pervasive control over South Korean society." The State Department's annual report on South Korea—although placing more emphasis on the "several significant positive steps in the human rights field," such as the freeing of some political prisoners and the decision to allow some student activists banned from the universities to re-enroll—says that "to many Koreans the degree of legitimacy of the Chun government is open to question."

Clearly, maintaining at least a veneer of democracy is important to Chun, who took power in a military coup in 1980. The United States is Korea's largest trading partner, and Chun will meet with President Reagan in April in the hope of further strengthening ties between the two countries. Korea will host the 1986 Asian Games, and the 1988 Summer Olympics, which Korean leaders view as the ultimate seal of approval from the international community. And Chun has said that an election will be held in 1988 to choose his successor.

But in reality, South Korean political life is severely restrained by the government. The recent elections for the National Assembly—touted by Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights Elliott Abrams as a demonstration of "the vitality of the liberalization and move to democratization" in South Korea—were marred by numerous campaign restrictions. Fifteen of the most popular opposition leaders, including Kim Dae Jung, were banned from active participation; equal time had to be alloted to candidates from the *majority* party during opposition rallies; and only three weeks were granted for the campaign. The elections were at least as controlled and unfair as the Nicaraguan elections in November, which the Reagan administration denounced as a sham.

Nevertheless, a new opposition party took advantage of the limited political opening and made a strong showing; together with other opposition groups, it won a majority of the open seats in the assembly. But the Korean political system awards 61 extra seats to the party that wins the most seats. Chun's party secured a comfortable majority with that convenient provision. Besides, the assembly is an essentially powerless body that can "suggest" legislation to the president but not make law.

CONSTRAINTS ON democracy continue to pervade Korean life. Several hundred journalists were banned in 1980, and most still are; those allowed to publish must respect government guidelines that dictate what's fit to print. Labor strikes, attempts at collective bargaining, and independent unions are consistently disrupted. Physical intimidation of human rights activists is common.

Students who are too active politically for the government's taste can be suspended from school—thus losing their exemption from the country's universal military conscription. The activists are then placed in special units and given "guidance" until they confess their sins and repent. The South Korean Public Security Law allows the government to put under surveillance, detain, or place in preventive custody for two years anyone who has been guilty of violating various subversion laws and who presents a "danger of repetition of the specified crimes."

In practice, this means that any opponents of the regime can be constantly harassed. The International League for Human Rights report cites the example of Soh Joon Shik, who was arrested in 1972 for participating in student protests and was given a six-year jail term. Before his sentence was completed, the government invoked the preventive custody clause, thus extending his term another two years. Preventive custody was applied again in 1980, 1982, and 1984. Soh is now scheduled for release in 1986, eight years after his original sentence expired.

Despite this record of abuse, the administration claims that quiet diplomacy in South Korea is working. Secretary of State George Shultz, though less enthusiastic than Reagan about democracy in Seoul, believes that "some progress is being made toward a more open society, a more democratic society." The State Department and the White House responded to Kim's homecoming fiasco by placing as much blame on Kim's American escort group as they did on the Korean security police. Yet even if the airport mistreatment was a misunderstanding, Washington had no comment on Seoul's failing the real test of democracy: when Kim left the airport, he was put under house arrest. The administration, it seems, reserves its public diplomacy for the democratic opposition.

But if there is any country where a little tough talk in public could do good without harming American interests, it is South Korea. There is no internal communist insurgency threatening the regime, which usually provides the adminstration with a marginally plausible explanation for supporting dictators elsewhere. Chun's opponents are democrats, no less revolted by North Korea than he is. Using the North Korean threat as an excuse for domestic repression is disingenuous; indeed, as Kim constantly reiterates, South Koreans enjoyed greater political freedom during the Korean War than they do today.

Seoul is largely dependent on the United States for markets and military aid. Without threatening to cut off either,

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Reagan should hint at removing the duty-free status of Korean exports to this country unless more reforms are enacted. The first such reform could be the removal of the ban on Kim and the other opposition leaders. The administration's refusal to give the Chun regime even a gentle push can only call into question the United States' commitment to democracy.

ANTONY J. BLINKEN

The phony end of the debt crisis.

FAUSTIAN FINANCE

As international bankers and the government of Argentina completed negotiations last December on restructuring Argentina's $45 billion debt, the mood was optimistic. Gone was the fear that the banking system was on the verge of collapse. With the signing of this agreement, the banks explained, Argentina, the most contentious of the big borrowers and the last to come to terms with the International Monetary Fund, had promised to keep servicing its debt at market rates of interest. "Debt Crisis Called All but Over" reported the *The New York Times* on February 4. The agreement apparently vindicated bankers whose business acumen had been questioned in the press and at congressional hearings. They had been right after all, it was said; their solutions had worked. And most important of all, the proposals requiring banks to give interest concessions to debtor nations had proved unnecessary.

The celebration of the so-called end of the debt crisis was short-lived. In mid-February the IMF announced that Brazil hadn't lived up to previous agreements and would not receive further IMF loans until it did, and that Mexico was in danger of not living up to its IMF agreement. Seen in the light of these developments, the Argentina agreement, far from being the breakthrough that would stablize the world financial system, stood out as the latest in a long series of Faustian financial agreements—bargains in which banks make new loans so that debtor nations have enough cash to continue paying interest on their old loans. This arrangement enables the banks to continue reporting fictitious profits on loan portfolios bulging with questionable assets.

On the surface, the Argentina agreement appears to be sound. Announced on December 2 and ratified by the IMF on December 28, it gives Argentina an additional 12 years to repay its bank debt, its $4.2 billion of new loans from a consortium of 320 banks, and $1.6 billion from the IMF. In exchange for more time and nearly six billion dollars of new money, Argentina promised to comply with the IMF's strict economic adjustment policies, to pay immediately most of the $1.2 billion of overdue interest it owes to its banks creditors, and not to fall behind on future interest payments. The pact resembles similar arrangements with Mexico and Venezuela negotiated earlier in 1984. At the conclusion of those negotiations, bankers explained that more time to pay—"long-term restructurings," in the vernacular of international banking—would be a reward for debtors such as Mexico and Venezuela that had a record of complying with IMF adjustment programs. Lower interest rates and longer repayment schedules, the bankers said, would encourage other Latin American debtors to continue playing by the rules of the game.

But Argentina walked away from the bargaining table with a better deal than either Mexico or Venezuela—precisely because it refused to play by those rules. In last year's negotiations, Mexico and Venezuela were given more time to pay, but not more money with which to do so. In the Argentina agreement, by contrast, each bank in the lending syndicate promised to increase its pro rata loans by 16.75 percent, a much larger amount than any other debtor nation has received.

Argentina's deal is proof of how little bargaining power the banks really have. When Argentina signed the agreement, it was already more than one billion dollars behind on its required interest payments and ten billion dollars behind on its principal repayments. In addition, more than two-thirds of its bank debt was coming due by the end of 1985. This unpleasant fact left the banks with only two choices: they could give Argentina new loans and extend its repayment schedule, or they could refuse, recognizing that, regardless of their decision, they weren't going to get paid.

PUT THIS WAY, the banks viewed their so-called choice as really no choice at all. By refusing to give Argentina more time to repay and more money with which to resume paying interest, banks would have had to declare their Argentine loans in default and remove them from their balance sheets. Bank earnings would plunge dramatically. For the banks to admit that even one of the large Latin American debtors is having trouble paying interest is—in more ways than one—capital punishment. Thus bankers are willing to go to almost any length to maintain the fiction that everything is for the best in the best of all possible worlds. This Panglossian attitude is not without its costs. It requires banks to keep lending more money so that debtor nations will have enough cash on hand to keep paying interest on their old loans.

Unfortunately, this only makes matters worse, for two reasons. First, debtor nations find themselves deeper in debt and no closer to being able to service their loans. New loans today mean higher interest payments tomorrow, and a second round of additional lending to pay the exploding interest bill. In addition, the banks have to borrow the money they are lending, usually by issuing certificates of deposits or by having their parent holding company issue commercial paper. In other words, in the world of Faustian finance, banks go deeper in debt to fund loans which allow LDCs to go deeper in debt. This practice

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makes it seem as if the financial system is solvent, but only because a second debt pyramid is being constructed for the express purpose of supporting the first debt pyramid.

BORROWING to pay interest is a chief cause of the current debt crisis, so it is difficult to see how more borrowing offers a way out of the morass. Between 1977 and 1983 Latin America's total external debt rose from $116 billion to $336 billion. Of this $220 billion increase, $154 billion, or 76 percent, was consumed by interest payments. Argentina's debt, for example, jumped from eight billion dollars to $40 billion between 1977 and 1983 while interest payments consumed $19 billion, or approximately 60 percent of that total new lending. In the same period Brazil's total debt grew by approximately $57 billion, rising from $35 billion to $92 billion. Interest payments accounted for approximately $48 billion, or nearly 85 percent of the increased debt. Borrowing to pay interest was the modus operandi in Brazil even before the 1979 jump in interest rates, the second oil price increase, and the most recent recession—the usual explanations given for the onset of the debt crisis. Between 1977 and 1979, before any of these events had taken their toll, Brazil's debt grew by $16 billion, while its interest payments totaled more than $11 billion. In Mexico, the second biggest Latin American debtor, the debt grew from $27 billion in 1977 to $87 billion at the end of 1982, of which $43 billion, or nearly 70 percent of the total borrowing, went for interest payments. Between 1977 and 1979, Mexico's debt grew by $14 billion, and interest payments amounted to eight billion dollars.

Today there is little prospect that Faustian finance can be halted as long as banks insist on collecting market rates of interest from countries that simply cannot pay them. Between 1982 and 1983, Latin American debtor nations spent an average of more than 35 percent of their export revenues on interest payments—three times more than the proportion recorded barely five years earlier. And this regional average masks the exceptionally large burden recorded in such high-debt countries as Argentina (51 percent), Brazil (44 percent), Costa Rica (44 percent), Chile (38 percent), and Mexico (38 percent).

Nevertheless, most Latin American countries are still not generating enough export earnings to cover their required interest payments. For all of Latin America, the 1983 trade surplus (the excess of exports over imports, or income over spending) totaled $25 billion, still far below the $38 billion of required interest payments. Argentina's two billion dollar trade surplus in 1983 was not nearly enough to pay the country's $5.5 billion interest bill. Similarly, Brazil's $6.3 billion trade surplus was swallowed up by its $11.5 billion of required interest payments. Only Mexico, with a $12.7 billion trade surplus, has managed to earn enough to pay interest in full. Every other country had to borrow.

So although growing trade surpluses have failed to eliminate the need for additional rounds of new lending, they have exacted an enormous toll on the economy of virtually every Latin American nation. For example, the Council of the Americas states in its January 1985 report, "Under current circumstances, officials estimate that it will take until the end of the decade for per capita *growth* in Latin America to return to pre-debt crisis levels." What they don't say is that in the meantime per capita *incomes*, which have fallen by as much as 20 percent in the two years since the onset of the crisis, will continue declining for the remainder of the decade.

Apparently the good news is that per capita incomes in these debt-ridden nations won't be declining as rapidly as before. But the bad news, according to a report released last year by the Economic Commission for Latin America, is that with slower growth "about 90 percent of the labor force incorporated in the 1980s would be out of work in 1990 . . . by 1990, there would be about 35 million more unemployed than in 1980." Put another way, international bankers are now betting that virtually all of Latin America will tolerate a decade of economic stagnation and decay simply so that their bankers can earn market rates of interest on debt that was contracted years ago to pay earlier rounds of interest. The more likely result is political instability and violence, as last year's riots in Brazil and the Dominican Republic and this January's riots in Jamaica vividly illustrate.

FORTUNATELY, there are several steps the United States can take both to preserve the safety and soundness of the international financial system and to promote economic growth and prosperity in Latin America. First and foremost, Congress can draft bank regulations that discourage banks from engaging in further rounds of Faustian finance. Currently, administrative officials threaten harsh regulatory treatment for any bank that refuses to make new loans to countries that cannot pay interest on their old loans. Rather than threatening retaliation for prudence, we need harsher regulatory treatment for imprudence. Specifically, banks should be forbidden to report profits on any foreign loans on which the banks are lending borrowers the money to pay interest. This will not only reduce the rewards for loaning money to pay back loans; it will also give banks an incentive to lower their interest rates to levels that debtor nations can pay without taking out new loans.

Second, Congress must keep in mind that the United States has a greater responsibility in Latin America than simply helping banks collect every penny of interest. Last September, the foreign affairs and finance ministers of 11 Latin American nations met in Mar del Plata, Argentina, and came to the same conclusion. "It is clear that the problem of indebtedness cannot be resolved only through negotiation with the banks and through discussions with the multilateral financial agencies, since the latter are unable to grasp the full scope of the political and social implications of this serious problem." The Latin American nations then called for a meeting of debtor and creditor governments, to be held sometime during the first six months of 1985.

Third, nurturing democracy and promoting human

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rights should be principal goals of foreign policy. We are now ceding authority over the pursuit of those interests to a group intent on pursuing a single-minded strategy of maintaining bank profits. Congress would never let the president enforce a similar threat without first complying with the War Powers Act and getting its approval. If war is too important to be left solely to the generals, then surely the conduct of foreign policy and international finance is too important to be left to the bankers.

CHARLES E. SCHUMER AND ALFRED J. WATKINS

Charles E. Schumer is a Democratic representative from New York. Alfred J. Watkins is an economist on his staff.

Sticking to principles is good politics.

WHAT THE DEMOCRATS MUST DO

BY WILLIAM SCHNEIDER

WHEN DEMOCRATS talk about their party these days, they seem to be reciting a ritual of confession. "We have no post-welfare program" (Stuart Eizenstat). "We have moved away from any notion of growth and economic competition" (Sharon Pratt Dixon). "We're obsessed with our process" (Governor Bruce Babbitt). "We're still torn apart by Vietnam and Iran" (Richard Moe). "We have lost four of the last five presidential elections" (Alan Diamonstein). "We are sick. We are losing our capacity to make our party work" (Sam Goddard). "We've abandoned white male voters." "We're a captive of our constituency groups." "We're too liberal." "We're a party of the past." For all these sins, Father, forgive us, pardon us, and grant us atonement. God may forgive, but what about the voters?

The party displayed its penitence, at vast expense, in its televised response to the president's State of the Union address on February 6. What the nation saw was warmed-over Jimmy Carter populism. "I don't know how to govern, so you tell me what you want me to do. I'm listening." (After all, we want a government just as good as the American people. Or do we?) In a commendable show of good taste, four times as many television viewers chose to watch "Dynasty."

The critics of the Democratic Party are largely concerned with what the Democratic Party should not be. It should not be too liberal. It should not be too tied to the past. It should not be too close to special interests. But people don't support a political party because of what it is not. At some point, you have to ask what the party should be.

Take the charge that the party is too liberal. To be sure, the conservative wing of the Democratic Party, like the liberal wing of the Republican Party, is dying. (Add up the votes for John Glenn, Reubin Askew, and Ernest Hollings in last year's Democratic primaries and you'll get some idea of how many conservative Democrats there are.) The party has been losing support among white southerners and blue-collar "ethnics," who do not share its prevailing social and foreign policy liberalism. But these voters supported the Democratic Party in the past for economic reasons. They tolerated the Democrats' social liberalism because they liked the party's economic populism. The party is losing their support not because it is too liberal, but because it has lost its economic bearings. If it has nothing to offer them economically, these voters are not going to come back just because it proclaims itself to be "centrist."

The Democrats' problem is statism. The party has learned too much from its successes of the past. From the New Deal, the party learned that federal power could be used to promote economic justice. From the civil rights revolution, the party learned that federal power could be used to promote social justice. Now the party is wedded to the instrumentality of federal power. It has to keep finding injustices so the federal government can do something about them.

For more than 150 years, the Democratic Party has been the party of social and economic justice. It has represented the interests of small farmers, European immigrants, religious and racial minorities, trade union members, poor people, and other out-groups of American society. The party's commitment to statism, on the other hand, is much more recent. In fact, for the first 100 years of its existence, the Democrats were anti-statist. Their platforms called for laissez-faire, states' rights, and low tariffs. To Jeffersonians and Jacksonians, the state was a bastion of wealth and privilege, and to be anti-statist was to be democratic and egalitarian.

Take a poll today and you'll find out that what people still like about the Democratic Party is its democratic and egalitarian values: it is more for "the average person," the worker, the ordinary citizen, and less for the rich and the

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powerful. What do people dislike about the Democratic Party? "Too much government spending." The party has to figure out how to keep its commitment to democracy and equality while weaning itself from an excessive reliance on government. This is no small problem.

In fact, the Democrats' dilemma is the major issue facing all industrial societies in the 20th century: Can you advance the cause of social and economic justice without increasing the power of the state? The serious social democrat will say no, you can't, but you can ensure that the power of the state is democratically controlled. But that answer won't get you very far in this country, where suspicion of government—indeed, suspicion of power—is a primordial value.

WHILE THE Democrats are thinking through the problem, there are two things they should keep in mind. First, you can't accomplish anything without economic growth. If the Democrats give up their commitment to growth, as they risked doing under Jimmy Carter's austerity policies, they will condemn themselves to failure. Whatever redistributive goals the Democrats were able to achieve in the past were facilitated by the party's commitment to growth and prosperity. Before 1980, the Democrats almost always came out ahead of the Republicans as the party that would do the better job of keeping the country prosperous. In 1980, as a result of Carter's failure, the parties were tied. In 1984, as a result of Reagan's success, the Republicans had a 17-point advantage on the prosperity issue.

But though a commitment to economic growth is necessary, it is not sufficient. That is where Democrats differ from Republicans. Reagan and the supply-siders believe growth is enough; the Glorious Free Market, as the British call it, will provide justice. Democrats know better.

Second, the most successful Democratic innovations have been those that benefit everybody, even if they benefit "have-nots" the most. They are Social Security, a New Deal program; and Medicare, a product of the Great Society. Those are the two programs Reagan can't touch without setting off a political firestorm. On the other hand, the War on Poverty—despite its successes—is regarded as a political failure. Perversely, the prosperity of the 1960s actually made it more difficult to carry out an explicitly redistributive policy.

During the Depression, everybody was suffering, the just and the unjust alike. Something was clearly wrong with the system. The New Deal set it right and gave everyone hope. It is quite different when the economy is booming, as it is now and as it was during the 1960s. The general feeling is that if somebody isn't making it when times are good, it must be his own damn fault. Nothing is fundamentally wrong with the system. Prosperity inevitably transforms the moral purpose of government intervention—and reduces its urgency. We, the deserving, are doing O.K. So the government action must be on behalf of them, the undeserving. Is that proper?

This is the Democrats' Catch-22. They can't succeed without economic growth, but prosperity undermines the moral justification for a redistributive policy. The answer, as welfare-state theorist T. H. Marshall pointed out many years ago, is that progressive social policies must take the form of universal rights. Social Security and Medicare help everyone because we all expect to grow old. When the economy is expanding, we can afford to broaden social rights—but only if they benefit everybody. That's about as much statism as Americans want. Government should protect and improve all of society, not restructure it to benefit certain groups.

It will not be easy to get Democrats to think in universal terms. Most voters have no problem with the Democratic Party's speaking out for the interests of women, blacks, and working people; that is its traditional role as advocate for the disadvantaged and victims of discrimination. But speaking out for the interests of feminists, labor unions, and civil rights organizations is something else. That is not populism. That is interest-group liberalism.

Nor will it be easy to curb the party's fixation on government. Blacks, for instance, have no quarrel with statism. The federal government has always worked for them. Twice in American history, the 1860s and the 1960s, the federal government rescued black Americans from intolerable situations. Anyone who talks about reconstructing the Democratic Party is going to have to think about reconstructing black voters, who now make up a quarter of the national Democratic vote.

THE VALIDITY of interest-group liberalism was one of the things Democrats were fighting about last year. The party divided three ways in the presidential primaries: 38 percent for Walter Mondale, 36 percent for Gary Hart, and 19 percent for Jesse Jackson. That fragmentation is the product of a civil war that has been going on in the Democratic Party for 16 years.

Go back to 1968. That was the year the party split between the regulars, who controlled the convention and nominated Hubert Humphrey, and the New Politics liberals, who protested Humphrey's nomination on the streets of Chicago. It was, quite literally, the outsiders versus the insiders. Walter Mondale was a protégé of Hubert Humphrey. Gary Hart worked for Robert F. Kennedy and sympathized with the protesters. That experience, more than anything else, defined the generational split in the Democratic Party that continues to this day. In 1984, Mondale was still Mr. Inside and Hart was still Mr. Outside.

Mondale is a party regular who moved to the left during the 1970s and became accepted by the New Politics establishment. At about the same time that Mondale was moving left, Gary Hart was moving right. Ever since his election to the Senate in 1974, Hart has taken pains to distance himself from "McGovernism." He became a specialist in military security and economic growth, neither of which had been of great concern to the McGovernite wing of the party, but both of which are important to regular Democrats. By sheer force of will, Hart developed the image of a pragmatic, non-ideological—indeed, anti-ideological—politician.

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The most interesting fact about the rivalry between Hart and Mondale was that major issue differences failed to emerge. The ideological profiles of both candidates' supporters were strikingly similar throughout the 1984 primaries, but the social distance between them was quite wide. Mondale's support was concentrated among older, poorer, strongly partisan Democrats; Hart did much better among younger, upscale, more independent voters. In other words, it looked like the old civil war between the liberals and the regulars, only with no Vietnam War or other great issue dividing the two sides.

SO WHAT were they fighting about? The choice between Mondale and Hart was a choice between two different approaches to politics. Mondale represented the "old politics," which is to say, interest politics; you support organized interests and they support you. He reached out to the left and brought New Politics groups into the party by showing them how Democrats have traditionally done business. Women's groups, civil rights groups, environmental groups, gay rights groups, and antinuclear groups were just so many more organized interests that the party could accommodate in time-honored fashion, alongside organized labor, big city mayors, and party functionaries.

Hart offered the New Politics. His "new idea" was to treat issues as problems susceptible to rational solutions, not as conflicts of interest to be negotiated and reconciled. Thus he accused Mondale of trying to find a fairer, more compassionate way to divide up a stagnant economic pie. Hart's aim was to get a bigger pie. He offered elaborately detailed proposals to use the tax system and other incentives to "solve" the nation's economic and security problems. In answer to Mondale's charge that he lacked compassion ("a heartless wretch," Mondale once called him), Hart replied, "Compassion is not just getting red in the face and waving the arms. Compassion is solving problems."

What was missing in Hart's approach was a sense of advocacy. That is why Mondale could read Hart's books and position papers and ask, "Where's the beef?" The party regulars heard about Hart's disdain for protectionism and for bailing out financially troubled industries and companies and wondered, "What's in it for us? Is this guy really on our side?" Hart promised only, in an echo of John F. Kennedy, to pull together "the best and the brightest" in order to "get the country moving again."

What many Democrats feared was that Hart was not another John Kennedy, but another Jimmy Carter. Carter too rejected advocacy politics in favor of problem-solving. He got into trouble when his solutions didn't work, and there was no one around to stick up for him. Party regulars distrust technocrats who believe politics is an objective, wholly rational business. Ronald Reagan, for instance, is an exceptionally skilled advocacy politician who built a following among people who feel he is on their side. When his solution for the nation's economic problems didn't seem to work during the first two years of his presidency, these people "stayed the course."

Thus the civil war in the Democratic Party continues, though it is less ideological than in the past. The new element in 1984 was Jesse Jackson. Black voters had never played a crucial role in the conflict between liberals and regulars. For years they had tended to split their votes in Democratic primaries along class and generational lines. In fact, most analysts expected the black vote to divide the same way in 1984, with about half going to Mondale and half to Jackson. After all, the black political establishment opposed Jackson's candidacy from the outset.

The big surprise was that Jackson held on to older, middle-class, establishment-oriented black voters as well as to younger and poorer blacks. His secret weapon was religion. He was a preacher, and that clearly legitimized him to more conservative blacks, who probably did not share many of his views, but for whom the church is an institution of trust and authority. What blacks discovered is that, as long as white Democrats were divided, they could wield a good deal of influence as a power bloc within the party. But blacks too are divided, caught between the anti-establishment politics of Hart and Jackson and the "gravy" politics of Mondale and the party establishment. When the party establishment chose Roland Burris to be the vice chairman of the Democratic National Committee over Jackson's man, Richard Hatcher, Jackson threatened to turn his Rainbow Coalition into a third party movement.

THE LATENT ideological aspect of the party's division is in its response to Reaganism. One of the more telling pieces of evidence from the primary exit polls showed that Mondale and Jackson did best among voters who felt there was no recovery at all. Confidence in the economy was consistently associated with support for Hart. Thus, Reagan's economic recovery played no small role in Gary Hart's campaign, whereas the bitter experience of the 1982 recession was important in mobilizing both the Mondale and Jackson constituencies.

The neoliberal voices in the party thrive on Reagan's success. Neoliberalism first came into existence in 1981, among frightened Democratic senators who saw what happened to their colleagues in 1980. Theirs is a "realistic" liberalism that tries to reach an accommodation with Reaganism. If there is a new antigovernment consensus in the country, Democrats must learn to live with it. Neoliberals reject what Charles Peters, the editor of *The Washington Monthly*, describes as "the adversary approach to problems" that "has come to dominate our national life at a disastrous cost to all of us." What they suggest instead is problem-solving.

Neoliberals differ from Reaganites in that they envision a positive role for government, using microeconomic policies that guide, plan, create incentives, and "solve problems." They feel no compunction in defending the traditional Democratic idea that government should be used for protection against economic adversity. To neoliberals, the proper use of government is to foster economic growth in the whole society, not to advance the

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interests of any one group or class against that of others.

In his recent speech in Boston, Gary Hart invoked the language of community against the Democratic Party's tradition of interest-group liberalism: "Demands of special interest groups—including the party's own constituencies—should be important but secondary." Hart revived one of the neoliberals' favorite ideas, a period of "national service," military or otherwise, for America's young people. In other words, class-mixing. (Neoliberals also display great enthusiasm for renovating another great engine of class-mixing in American life, the public school system.) What Hart had to say about government accepted one of Ronald Reagan's basic premises: "The Democratic Party must govern well, but it must not be the party of government. Democrats must understand that government exists to serve the people and not the people to serve the government."

Set against the "me too" Democrats are the "I told you so" Democrats. Their patron saint is Edward Kennedy and their great hope Mario Cuomo. Their philosophy is "Never apologize, never explain." When Kennedy speaks to a Democratic audience, it resembles nothing so much as a revival meeting—"The old-time religion is good enough for me." We are right and Reagan is wrong, and it's only a matter of time before the country realizes it.

That kind of argument made a lot of sense in 1982, and it will sound good again if there is another major recession between now and 1988. On the other hand, Democrats should learn a lesson from the old-guard Republicans who never accepted the New Deal. They said the excessive growth of government would bring about massive inflation. Which it did—50 years later. They had to wait an awfully long time to say, "I told you so."

IN THE MEANTIME, the populist base of the Democratic Party has pretty much disintegrated. The religious right in the Republican Party thinks it can appeal to these fallen-away Democrats with traditionalist moral values. The Jack Kemp faction in the House of Representatives dreams of a Republican economic populism based on tax reform. The Democrats don't have much to compete with this. Hart suffered from a severe deficiency of populism in the 1984 primaries. Neoliberals don't really play the populist game at all. Mondale offered the failed interest-group liberalism of the past. And Jackson proposed a radical, redistributive populism that frightened the wits out of the middle classes.

The Democrats do have one advantage: they are an opposition party no longer in control of the national agenda. They don't have to govern the country. What they have to do is convince people that they have their act together and can govern when the Republicans fumble, which they inevitably will. They also have to show that they have learned something. Americans were afraid to vote Republican from 1932 to 1952 because they were afraid the Republicans hadn't learned anything; they would get into office and undo the New Deal. People have the same fears about the Democrats now: if they manage to get elected, they will pretend Ronald Reagan never

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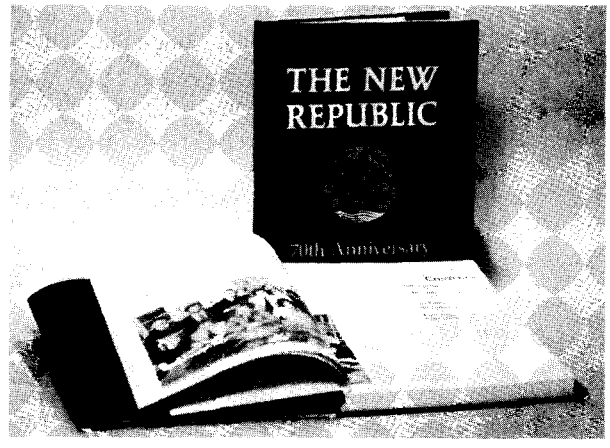

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existed and go back to the way things used to be. As a party program, that will never do.

The Democrats will regain credibility by sticking to the traditional strength of the party. Americans have no quarrel with the vigorous and innovative use of government to reform and improve society. That's what the Progressives and the New Dealers did. Mario Cuomo's speeches, in which he extols the positive use of government to create opportunity, improve the system, and expand economic growth, never fail to evoke a visceral response from Democrats: yes, that is what we are all about. The problem is, Cuomo is extolling a memory. The Progressives and New Dealers used government power to attack vested interests and challenge the status quo. To most Americans, government is now the establishment, and defending it means defending statism and interest-group liberalism. The Democrats need not abandon government, but they must disavow establishment thinking. The idea of government as an anti-establishment institution sounds peculiar these days, but it is in fact in the Democratic Party's best tradition.

What's really wrong with Star Wars.

NUCLEAR IDEALISM, NUCLEAR REALISM

BY LEON WIESELTIER

RONALD REAGAN OWES Jonathan Schell an apology.

Item. In mid-January the administration unveiled what it called a new "strategic concept," drafted by Paul Nitze and approved by President Reagan for the arms control negotiations in Geneva that will begin in a few weeks. The document is a prescription for the next decade and it is a whole paragraph long. It is immensely important for the purpose of understanding the strategic mentality that currently rules the American roost. The Nitze concept calls for three things—for three miracles, really—in consecutive order. First, "a radical reduction in the number and power of existing and planned offensive and defensive nuclear arms." Second, "a period of transition, beginning possibly ten years from now, to effective non-nuclear defensive forces, including defenses against offensive nuclear arms." Third, "the eventual elimination of nuclear arms . . . a nuclear-free world."

Students of the philology of strategy will recognize all this to read "deep cuts," "Star Wars," and, well, the end of days. Not much that is new, in short. It is the provenance of the scheme, however, that is striking. It may be found, in more vaporous form, in *The Abolition* by Jonathan Schell. In the second chapter of his second book Schell proposes a scheme for the abolition of nuclear weapons that calls first for dramatic arms control (in his case, in the form of a freeze at present levels), then "an agreement abolishing nuclear weapons" (from his mouth to God's ears), and finally strategic defenses. The defense of defenses on pages 112-118 could have come as easily from the offices of the Pentagon as from the offices of *The New Yorker*. It must be said to Schell's credit, however, that he had the wit to precede strategic defense with multilateral disarmament. It does not add to the practicality of his proposal, but it protects it from the many technological and strategic objections to which the administration's version of defenses is vulnerable.

Item. On January 27 *The New York Times Magazine* contained an article called "Defense in Space Is Not Star Wars" by Zbigniew Brzezinski, Robert Jastrow, and Max Kampelman. Kampelman has been appointed to head the American delegation to Geneva. The article rehearsed the standard arguments for strategic defenses, but its most arresting sentences were its first and its last. "Faith moves mountains," these hard-headed hawks began. And they ended with the stricture that "the aim of making nuclear weapons impotent and obsolete should be encouraged and not savaged." Now take your mind back to 1982, and recall the savaging of Jonathan Schell's *The Fate of the Earth*, by those with just these men's views, for making just their point. "To reinvent politics, to reinvent the world": Schell's formula for the faith that moves mountains practically entered the language as an example of loony loftiness. It was roundly and rightly mocked. But suddenly the Reagan administration's intellectuals have lost their inhibitions. The spirits of the national security establishment may soar again.

What happened? The answer is simple. The president made a speech. On March 23, 1983, Reagan declared for "Star Wars." He said that populations could be defended against nuclear weapons and nuclear weapons could be made obsolete. Intellectual life in Washington has never been the same. Good thing the president didn't declare for phlogiston, or that the world is flat. For proximity to power apparently confuses the mind. Not even science can withstand the immense intellectual authority of the presi-

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dential seal. And so a process of mental modification and rhetorical revision began that has transformed the false into the true. Jonathan Schell is a dreamer. Ronald Reagan is a visionary. The double standard is breathtaking.

In fact they are both dreamers. And Schell owes his hundreds of thousands of readers an apology, too. Who said that we need world government to meet the nuclear predicament? his second book asks angrily. The answer is, Schell in his first book. And who said that deterrence is dangerous and devoid of instruction? his second book asks angrily again. The answer again is, Schell in his first book. When political writers change their minds, they owe an explanation. But the strategic and philosophical convergence of Ronald Reagan and Jonathan Schell is more than an ironic complication of the intellectual climate. It casts an interesting light on the nuclear debate.

SINCE THE ADVENT of the nuclear age, the debate has been between the camps of nuclear idealism and nuclear realism. Nuclear idealism believes in transformation; nuclear realism believes in management. By nuclear idealism I mean the many abolitionisms that have accumulated in the alarmed decades of the recent past—the abolition of nuclear weapons, the abolition of the arms race, the abolition of war, the abolition of the system of sovereign states, the abolition of the evil in man. By nuclear realism I mean the many refinements of technology, strategy, diplomacy, and politics that have been designed simply to prevent the macabre machinery from going off. The idealists will be satisfied by disarmament; the realists, by deterrence and arms control.

The nuclear debate has been distorted by the notion that idealism and realism are mutually exclusive. It would be more sensible to see them rather as a division of labor. As Irving Howe has observed in a different context, there is the politics of the near and the politics of the far. There is nothing the matter with nuclear idealism, with the search for a final release from this fact of our life, unless it denies that they also serve who merely superintend the instruments of mass destruction. There is nothing the matter with nuclear realism, with the careful calibration of arsenals and balances, unless it denies that the danger of mass destruction still remains after all that the deterrers and the arms controllers can do.

But the idealists' argument against the realists is proving more successful than the realists' argument against the idealists. After all, it is hard to argue against the vision of a world without these ugly things; hard to be satisfied in your heart with the idea that the greatest peril in human history should be met with concepts of management; hard to fill the streets with people in the name of "flexible options" and "bargaining chips." Until recently the political appeal of idealism seemed the same as the political appeal of the left. Then lightning struck. Ronald Reagan joined the camp of the idealists.

That was the real significance of his Star Wars speech. It was the first time that the man confessed to a fear of nuclear war, and to a fantasy about a world without nuclear weapons. No more smiles and smugness about limited nuclear exchanges and the like. Reagan finally agreed that the American people are right to worry. Thus overnight Reagan started to turn the sentimental foundation of the peace movement, which was battening upon the same fear and the same fantasy, to his advantage. It might even be said that Reagan became part of the peace movement. He merely had a different path to peace. The path was defenses, or what he called the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI). There has always existed in the American strategic community a tradition of right-wing nuclear idealism, for which defenses are the answer. It differs from its left-wing counterpart, however, in being tolerant of offensive nuclear devices and doctrines. Many of these idealists of the right found jobs in the administration. The president left the strategic meanings of Star Wars to them. Its psychological and political meanings, however, were plain. The selling of Star Wars began.

THERE ARE THOSE to whom it need not be sold and there are those to whom it cannot be sold. There are scientists, soldiers, and strategists in both camps. The administration understood that the Union of Concerned Scientists, for example, could not be convinced. The group's report on ballistic missile defenses, issued recently by Vintage Books as *The Fallacy of Star Wars*, offers impressive scientific objections to space-based missile defenses and antisatellite weapons. The Reagan administration resolved to work around the laws of physics with the laws of politics. The plan is working. At times the Reaganites have behaved a little basely, as in their frequently heard feeling that the scientific opposition to Star Wars is politically inspired. In one instance they tried to suppress a background paper of the Office of Technology Assessment, "Directed Energy Missile Defense in Space" by Dr. Ashton B. Carter of Harvard, which dissented rigorously from the official enthusiasm for SDI. An independent panel of strategists and scientists forced the administration to reconsider, and the excellent paper was released.

The laws of physics require proof. The laws of politics do not. The political objective of the sellers of Star Wars was not consensus, but credulity. The idea of strategic defenses had to be made legitimate before it could be made into strategy. To be sure, the *idea* is legitimate. In the end it stands or falls on whether it is feasible. Those who argue that it is feasible are for it, and those who argue that it is not feasible are against it. The culprits in the Star Wars debate, in other words, are not at the extremes. The culprits are in the middle. They are those who do not believe that Star Wars or "total defense" or "population defense" is feasible, but still refuse to argue fully against it. Instead they invent a variety of halfway houses that allow them to remain with the community of influence that has grown up around the president's idea. They are nuclear realists at the court of the nuclear idealists.

Henry Kissinger, who suddenly sees some merit in Star Wars, is an example. The worst examples of all, however, are the conservative Democrats. These people who have

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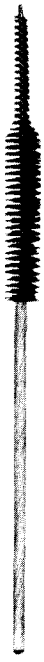

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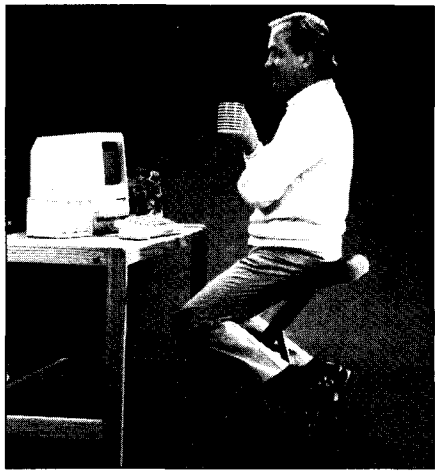

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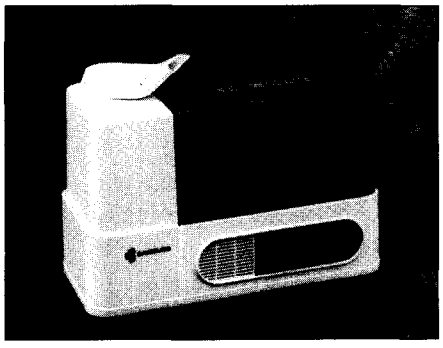

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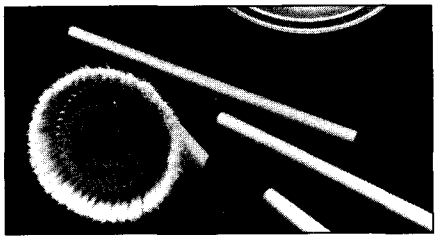

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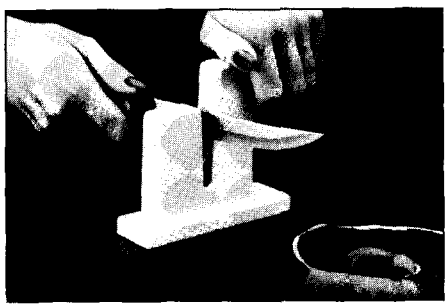

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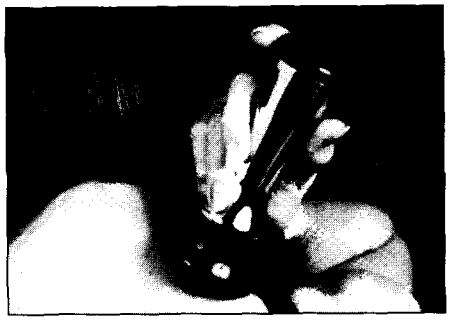

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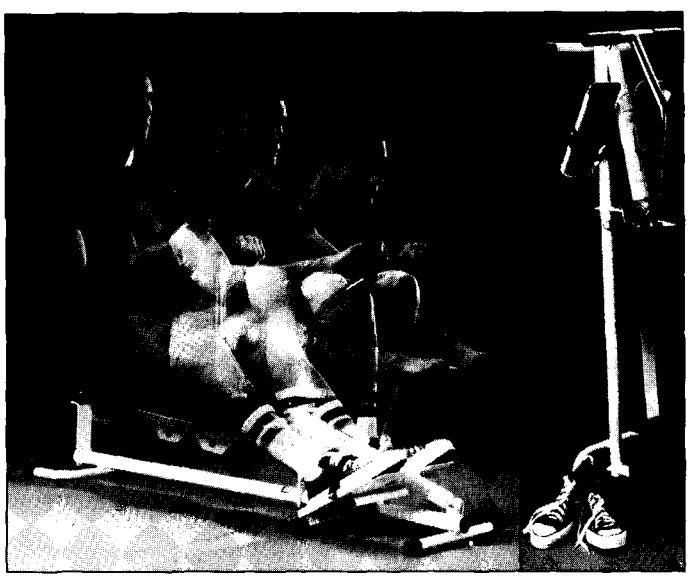

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kept the discussion of national security honest, and told liberals the truth about the moral and political importance of defense, are this time corrupting the discussion, and lying to liberals.

THERE ARE three ways in which a lot of people in Washington are having it both ways on Star Wars. The first is what is known as "point defense." In the current argot of the administration, this is called "transitional defense." It is the idea of a ground-based system to defend our missile silos or more generally our strategic installations. Nothing exotic or extraterrestrial; the technology for it, as the Army keeps reminding the president, already exists. The task of defending a limited area is much easier than the task of defending the whole country. According to Lieutenant General James A. Abrahamson, the director of SDI, such a system of defense could be deployed before the end of the decade. Though it is being vaunted in the editorial columns and Op-Ed pages as a bold and original approach to the current discussion of defense, the idea is about as old as ballistic missiles themselves. Its justification, then and now, is the "enhancement" of deterrence. That is, a defense of our strategic forces would leave us still more secure against the possibility of a Soviet strike, by adding yet another complication for Soviet planners, another reason for the Soviets not to launch.

This is all very good, but it is all beside the point. It is not the enhancement of deterrence that the president wants, but the transcendence of deterrence. To be sure, the enhancement of deterrence is always interesting and important; and there are many ways (most of them terrestrial) to enhance it. But it is a concept of management, not a concept of transformation. The Star Wars debate must be about transformation. In this the president is right. "Point defense" contributes nothing to the critical discussion of nuclear idealism. It proposes a change in degree. The president and the people want to know about a change in kind. ("Point defense," moreover, has its own problems, notably the probability of Soviet countermeasures based on technology that already exists in its arsenal, and the probability of a race in defensive arms.)

The second excuse for suffering Star Wars gladly is the "window of vulnerability." In their *Times Magazine* article, Brzezinski, Jastrow, and Kampelman perform a remarkable act of intellectual resuscitation. They argue that space-based defenses are necessary because of the possibility of a Soviet first strike against our land-based missile force. If this has a slightly anachronistic ring, it is no wonder. The Scowcroft Commission, you will recall, retired the "window of vulnerability" rather cogently a few years ago. It did so by showing that the window (which is open on both sides, incidentally, as the "Gang of Three" recognizes) may be closed by changing the way we base our nuclear missiles. The Scowcroft Commission proposed a move toward "Midgetman," a mobile single-warhead missile that would be harder to hit and a less attractive target. The Gang doubts that "Midgetman" is the answer. (Such doubt is more and more in the air around the administration; the makers of the Scowcroft bargain had better heed it.) They say it is expensive, which is an odd objection from supporters of Star Wars. And they wonder how and where it may be deployed, forgetting that faith moves mountains.

The Gang's general proposition is that strategic problems on earth require solutions in space. (They might consider, for example, the extent to which the "window of vulnerability" argument for SDI weakens the "window of vulnerability" argument for the MX.) It is an interesting proposition, but it must be proved. Meanwhile solutions on earth for problems on earth seem more sensible—first, because some plausible solutions have been suggested, and second, because solutions in space will bring problems in space. The notion that the militarization of space brings no new risks is ridiculous. It might simply push back the frontiers of our insecurity; satellites are more vulnerable than missiles. More to the point, however, the Gang's proposition is not the president's proposition. Mr. Reagan did not kindle to Star Wars because of his brooding about basing modes. This is one strategic idea that he did not develop because of the "window of vulnerability." It will profit the debate nothing to pretend that the reason for Star Wars is anything other than the ridding of the earth of nuclear weapons.

The third way to be for Star Wars without believing in it is to say that it serves arms control. This is the best way. Nothing silences criticism so swiftly as the mention of arms control. This is also the most brazen way. It defies both the history and the theory of arms control. It flies in the face of the Reagan administration's own analysis of arms control and of strategic defenses. And it exploits a popular expectation of arms control that deserves to be retired.

THE ARGUMENT is that SDI is a "bargaining chip," that it provides American negotiators with the leverage at the table to make a comprehensive strategic arms deal in which SDI would be surrendered. This is not the first time that the attempt has been made to fool American liberals with banter about bargaining chips. There is an obvious contradiction at the heart of the theory of the bargaining chip. Consider the logic. What matters most to us, the theory runs, we will give away. The most sophisticated products of our technology, the most expensive programs of our economy, the most subtle instruments of our strategy are the enemy's for the asking. Now this is simply not credible. States do not behave this way; nor should they. It is to Reagan's credit that he has had no truck with this cynical theory. The president has made it perfectly clear (as have other administration officials) that he has no intention of giving Star Wars away, most recently in an interview with Bernard Weinraub of *The New York Times*. This is as it should be, if the president believes that it will change our fate. If Star Wars will make possible the protection of our population, as the president says, it would be nothing less than an act of treason to stop the program or to share the program. Idealists make poor negotiators.

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If Star Wars works, it must not be a bargaining chip. If Star Wars doesn't work, it cannot be a bargaining chip. The bargaining chip argument, then, is a bit of a swindle. (As was the same argument for the MX. Either we need the missile or we do not.) Nor is that all. A bargaining chip argument about an administration with a principled skepticism toward arms control carries little weight. The Gang, for example, which includes the chief American arms control negotiator, remarked rather proudly of SDI that "it brought the Russians back to the bargaining table." Maybe; but these same gentlemen disparaged, only a few pages previously, and not sorrowfully, the possibility of a deal. And this is not the last time that Kampelman may find himself caught in contradiction. It will be amusing, for example, to watch the American team in Geneva attack the Soviets' ABM installation and advance the case for antiballistic missile defense in the same breath.

The Soviets, moreover, may not respond to Star Wars precisely as the bargaining-chip argument expects them to respond. According to the argument, the prospect of American defensive weapons will provoke a significant reduction in Soviet offensive weapons. The opposite, however, may be the case. SDI may have the consequence of increasing the importance of Soviet ICBMs. The traditional response to a shield is a second sword. As Brent Scowcroft recently observed, "As a practical matter it would be very difficult to induce the Soviets to reduce their offensive forces if they faced the prospect of a strategic defense for which they might need those offensive forces to penetrate." This is completely consistent with what we know about our own behavior in such circumstances. When the Soviets, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, set out toward an ABM system, we did not lower the level of our offensive power. We increased it, by MIRVing. It is now commonly agreed that MIRVing was responsible for the present precariousness of land-based missiles; and the cutting edge of thinking about arms control in recent years has been the search for safe ways of "de-MIRVing." SDI may have the effect, however, of re-MIRVing—that is, of placing an unprecedented strategic premium on the number of warheads. The more defense, the more offense. That seems to be the rule.

THIS DOESN'T mean that SDI deserves to be dismissed just because it is bad for arms control. Not everything that is bad for arms control is bad for us. Arms control must be judged by its terms and its consequences. It is mischievous to encourage an eschatological expectation of arms control. Such an expectation is already widespread enough; even Reagan has evidenced it. The media's melodramatic treatment of the meetings in Geneva muddies things more. The American people are being set up for a disappointment. There does not appear to be much that the forthcoming talks can accomplish. We will not surrender what the Soviets value most, the Strategic Defense Intiative, because we value it most; and they will not surrender what we value most, the most advanced systems of the Strategic Rocket Forces, because they value it most. More important, all these testimonials to arms control represent a misunderstanding of its essential modesty. If Ronald Reagan and Konstantin Chernenko were to sign a treaty drafted by George Kennan, according to which each side would reduce its arsenal by half, each side would still hold in its possession the power to destroy the world. Arms control, then, will not free us from what we fear; it will merely help us manage it. It is, in other words, the quintessential exercise of nuclear realism. It cannot be defended as anything more.

STILL, it deserves to be defended. And so does nuclear realism generally. In the matter of preventing nuclear war, to accomplish a little is to accomplish a lot. The magnitude of the danger itself is the reason. The prospect of the destruction of the world of nature and the world of culture would seem to call rather plainly for the strong medicine of nuclear idealism, for the various abolitionisms to which many people in recent years have understandably aspired. But the contrary is closer to the mark. The most responsible attitude toward a danger so great is to stick close to it, and to think coolly about it. Indeed, it should inspire a whole new respect for the here and the now. These things could go off.

A few years ago nuclear realism had to be defended against the peace movement, and its agitation for disarmament. Now it must be defended against the president, and his agitation for defense. SDI deserves to be dismissed on its own terms; a perfect defense of populations is impossible and an imperfect defense of populations is ignorable, at least from the standpoint of saving us from the present situation. (In the most judicious essay I have read on the subject, Harold Brown concludes that "the combinations of limitations—scientific, technological, systems engineering, cost—and especially the potential countermeasures make the prospect of a perfect or near perfect defense negligibly low.") But it must also be dismissed for its interference with the public's understanding of its own predicament. The president is lulling the American people. He is part and parcel of the peace movement in this respect, too. He has joined with it (and the Catholic bishops) in the delegitimation of deterrence. Deterrence may be a sad description of reality, but it is a true description of reality. It will remain a true description for many years to come. Complicity, says the peace movement of such a description. Defeatism, says the president. But is it complicity to dispel illusion? Is it defeatism to suggest that the impossible will not come to pass? Nobody likes the danger we are in. But more dangerous still is the distraction from the danger.

The good news about Reagan's proposal is its radicalism, which represents an entirely appropriate amount of alarm. The bad news about his proposal is also its radicalism. It is a florid fantasy. There can be no unradical response, therefore, to the primary problem that Reagan has put. There is no middle this time. You are a nuclear idealist or you are a nuclear realist. The idealists have found each other. Now the realists must. □

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STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

Night and Light

Lambert, a pudgy, middle-aged quasi-alcoholic, works the night shift at a filling station in a shabby district of Paris. He is taciturn, impassive. Bensoussan, a young half-Arab half-Jew, around 20, stops in one night for a moped spark plug (really to duck the police who are rolling by in a patrol car). Nothing much happens between Lambert and Bensoussan. But the visits recur because, we feel, both are secretly lonely. In the early part of the story we spend more time with the youth than with the older man, and we soon learn that Bensoussan, who has said he is a bartender, is really a drug pusher for an Arab café owner. He confesses this to Lambert one night as they sit together in the filling station. Lambert merely shrugs and says the youth will be dead soon. By this time, however, we know that the two are grudgingly fond of each other. When Lambert is too soused to pump gas, Bensoussan helps out. When the youth gets beaten up by some other dealers, Lambert finds his rat-hole room and cleans him up.

Tchao Pantin
(European Classics)

It's from a novel called *Tchao Pantin* and keeps the title, which translates roughly as Ciao, Dumbbell. The novel is by Alain Page, but it sounds like Simenon. When the youth has a three-hour affair with a punk girl, and later describes it to Lambert, the Simenon quality increases; it increases further when the girl, who has entered the story obliquely, becomes involved with Lambert after Bensoussan is killed. (No surprise. It was bound to come, as Lambert predicted.) And the focus of the narrative is pure Simenon, the intense inquiry into grubby lives being lived in cramped attitudes, an inquiry that discloses pathos, drama, even magnitude.

The director, Claude Berri, who wrote the screenplay with Page, understands all this. But the difference from Simenon, which makes this good film somewhat lesser than it might have been, is that Berri-Page explain too much. We know almost from the start what the youth's life is, that Lambert lives alone. We know by Lambert's very ignoring of Bensoussan's questions that he once had a wife and family. For the Simenon effect, that's all we need to know. But the script works out parallels between Lambert's past and the present that neaten up the film too much, that make its mysteries into coincidences and transform a slicing into life (rather than a slice of life) into a tidily balanced story. The relationship between the street boy and the sodden night-shift man, their wretched grasp for "family" in the small, lighted station amid gas pumps and dark buildings, was foundation enough. The action that follows the boy's death would have been more moving if it had been less precisely justified.

Whether the balancing is in the novel I don't know. Berri's work has antecedents for both the strengths and timidities of the film. He has been directing for 20 years and has made soppy films (*The Two of Us*) and at least one that was truthfully disturbing (*In a Wild Moment*). The best of this new film, most of it, is Berri's best; the weak bits rank with his weakest. I could hardly believe my eyes when, just before the end, a black cat crossed Lambert's path.

But *Tchao Pantin* sneaks up on you. It promises little at the start, and in a curious way, that small promise is inviting. No gripping situation is set up. All that happens is that two completely credible human beings move into view—and into view of each other. Because of the director's cool, ungrabby hand at the beginning, the film wins our confidence. This confidence is never quite betrayed: the essence of those two people remains, and the girl's is added. The picture never goes flat: it just becomes too much of a movie.

Most of the good quality comes from Berri's actors. Lambert is played by a man called simply Coluche, who has a reputation as a comedian. He is temperamentally a cross between Jack Warden and Walter Matthau, though he doesn't look like either. I had seen Coluche only once before, dismal in a dismal comedy called *My Best Friend's Girl*. *Tchao Pantin* has nothing to do with comedy: Coluche goes to the core of a dour man, convincing us of the man's tacit reasons for dourness. Lambert is a silent dark pool on one side of the rushing city currents.

Richard Anconina, scrawny and beak-nosed, creates a Bensoussan completely concentrated on the small objectives and defiances of his life, yet vulnerable to generosity. Anconina doesn't trade on recognizable street mannerisms; his Bensoussan is an individual who lives in the street world. And Lola, the punk girl played by Agnes Soral, progresses touchingly from a role that she had adopted to the Lola who had adopted the role.

The cinematography is by Bruno Nuytten, who worked in this country once. (He did *Brubaker* with Robert Redford.) At first, despite the virtuosity of the opening rain sequence, I thought the film looked a bit viscous; but as it went along, the rather thick colors em-

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Bizet's Carmen. Francesco Rosi sees the work freshly, not as a filmed account of an old favorite but as an exciting film musical. Smashing. (Reviewed 10/1/84)

1984. In a gray-green world, streaked with different blacks, John Hurt (Winston Smith) and Richard Burton (O'Brien) fulfill the core of Orwell's tortured book. (2/4/85)

A Passage to India. David Lean, a master of middle-road cinema, does considerable honor to Forster's masterwork, aided by a generally sterling cast. (1/21/85)

Witness. Into the Amish world, peaceful and sturdy, a gory crime story intrudes. The lovely setting and Kelly McGillis, lovely in herself, refresh the plotty plot. (2/28/85)

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phasized the neon-soaked feeling of these night lives. The art director is Alexandre Trauner, born in 1906, who has been working in film since 1932—to name just one of his many achievements, *Children of Paradise*—and is an acknowledged master in his field. I don't contend that the settings here are immediately recognizable as a master's work, but they certainly are vivid.

I like to read good interviews. The good ones are often entertaining and, more often, instructive. A new, intelligent collection is *Masters of Light*, 15 interviews with contemporary cinematographers conducted by Dennis Schaefer and Larry Salvato (University of California Press, 355 pp., $27.50). The subjects are all Americans or men who work often in America, going alphabetically from Nestor Almendros to Vilmos Zsigmond. It's not the first book of its kind—one antecedent is *Hollywood Cameramen* by Charles Higham—but it illuminates further something that has been true from the beginnings of film, something increasingly valued by directors and perceived by viewers: the degree to which the cinematographer is the director's colleague—not employee, however exalted. (On *Tchao Pantin* Berri credits Nuytten as cinematographer and as artistic collaborator.)

Fifteen men naturally vary in opinions and ambitions. Two of the more consistent points are: the reliance of the director and the cinematographer on painting and on previous films to explain to each other what each wants to do; the close connection between the shooting of a film and the laboratory that's developing the dailies. To some of these cinematographers, a specific lab man is as important a collaborator as anyone on the set.

Two samples of the talk. Michael Chapman (who did *Raging Bull*):

> Angles tell us emotional things in ways that are mysterious. . . . I think a particular angle is going to do one thing and it does something quite different. . . . Angles seem the most mysterious thing about movies to me. . . . I don't have any sense that I understand them. . . . If [cinematographers] really are trying, and trying to do something for the first time, then [they] are using unconscious material surprisingly intensely. And I think one of the ways that unconscious material reveals itself is in angles. . . . It's genuinely mysterious. And I don't like mystery. . . . But there's no sense pretending that that mystery isn't there.

Gordon Willis (who did *Annie Hall*):

> . . . You constantly have to keep reminding yourself and others that you have to maintain the same point of view through the movie in order to make it work as a total piece of material. . . . There are directors who go off course; there are cameramen who go off course too. But it's your job. . . . You have to keep the whole movie in your head all the time.

A fascinating book. Pity that there are no photographs. Stills could have illustrated in more than one sense.

Robert Brustein On Theater

Becoming the Other Side

Most of the shows I've seen lately are too indifferent to review. *Pack of Lies* (Royale Theater) is no exception, but at least it posits a provocative idea. As drama, Hugh Whitemore's London hit, like most current West End plays, is stuck in an aesthetic that has been frozen for more than 20 years, so badly designed for export that its dependable, likable actors still seem lined up at customs and immigration. This is a play that wraps itself up in old newpapers, perhaps in the hope that journalistic references might somehow compensate for artistic deficiencies. ("The main events of the story are true," says the program wanly.) I don't mean to suggest there's anything cynical or cheap about *Pack of Lies*. It's just gray, flat, moribund, a crudely carpentered construction that lies on the stage like an abandoned crate on the loading dock.

Pack of Lies
by Hugh Whitemore

The play begins with an ordinary middle-class English family, who lives in an ordinary English house, engaging in ordinary English conversation. No, it's not *The Bald Soprano*, it's a spy story. A British undercover team wants to use this place to survey the movements of the neighbors next door, who might be enemy agents. The moral problem is that the neighbors—a cheerful couple pretending to be Canadians (they are later exposed as left-wing Americans radicalized by the Rosenbergs)—are close friends of Bob and Barbara (George N. Martin and Rosemary Harris). The innocent twosome are tricked into compliance by the misrepresentations of the agent Stewart (Patrick McGoohan), who persuades them he only wants to watch the comings and goings of an illegal Russian immigrant. At first irritated about the invasion of her house for surveillance purposes, Barbara soon discovers she has become a pawn in the betrayal of her friends. Before she can take a principled stand, she finds herself thoroughly enmeshed in a web of lies and deceit. The neighbors are exposed as Communists holding posts in the KGB; the wife vilifies Barbara, who is left with her guilt and remorse, and later dies (we learn) of a heart attack. "You've made us do the lying," she tells the British agent in the showdown scene. "We're all playing the same rotten game."

One waits in vain for a dramatic reversal—say, the discovery that the real Russian agent is Stewart and the neighbors have been tracking *him*—but *Pack of Lies* defies even the normal conventions of surprise. Instead, the play sacrifices anything remotely theatrical for the sake of its political moral, which is that governments make helpless victims of innocent bystanders, that the struggle between East and West has begun to pit the state against the very citizenry it is supposed to be serving. I said this was interesting; it is hardly new. The idea, in fact, is now so pervasive in movies, television, and popular literature that it has virtually become a cliché of Cold War entertainment. Ever since Le Carré's *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold*, most British espionage thrillers have assumed that the various covert agencies dedicated to protecting the free world pose threats to democracy almost as dangerous as the Soviet Union itself. Hollywood invariably depicts the FBI and the CIA (once synonymous with heroic cinematic virtue) as virtually indistinguishable in method from the KGB—in short, as cynical, ruthless assassination bureaus willing to sacri-

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fice hapless civilians, and even their own agents, for expedient ends. One expects to find this in muckraking literature, but hardly in the entertainment industry, which, however critical of the social system it has been in the past, has never before reflected such a profound erosion of confidence in our traditional structures and institutions. Why isn't this a subject for serious sociological and political discussion?

The one place you'll find any notice of the subject is in such magazines as *Commentary* and *The New Criterion*, where it is inevitably an occasion for shrill neoconservative invective. Indeed, what passes for cultural criticism in these journals is a species of ideological CAT scan, where any creative work, no matter how personal or subjective, is examined for suspicious political motives, in order to charge the author with anti-Americanism or worse. It may be comforting to have these vigilantes monitoring our flagging patriotism, but they are hardly qualified to address the crisis in social confidence. Indeed, they may very well be showing why it exists. For what lies behind such works as *Pack of Lies* is the assumption that Cold War zealotry has corrupted political thinking and dehumanized debate, that to concentrate too remorselessly on a single evil is to risk becoming that evil yourself.

The truth of this proposition was clearly demonstrated in the sixties and seventies, when certain radical groups, in the act of protesting violence and racism, took on some of the violent, racist qualities they deplored. As one character says, in Genet's *The Balcony*, "If we behave like the other side, then we are on the other side." I fear we are presently beginning to resemble the other side not just in our techniques of political surveillance, but in our methods of artistic surveillance as well, in the way some self-appointed cultural commissars are trying to scour art and entertainment of aberrant elements. (This is hardly limited to critics on the right; some blacks in Chicago have been threatening to burn copies of *Huckleberry Finn* and close down the Goodman Theater production because of an alleged insult to their race.) Of course critics should examine the political implications of cultural works; such criticism shows these works are being taken seriously. But there is a difference between inquiries and inquisitions, just as there is a distinction between judging and sentencing. The strident attacks on certain artists who deviate from some presumed political norm sometimes suggest a desire to squelch them, which, we should remember, is the distinguished tradition associated with "the other side."

It's not easy to say where negative criticism shades off into critical censorship; a lot depends on the tone, approach, and particularly the power of the critic. An example of how delicately the issue is balanced is the current issue (February) of *The New Criterion*, which contains an attack by Samuel Lipman on the works of Robert Wilson and Philip Glass. Although neither of these artists has shown much interest in radical politics, Mr. Lipman somehow manages to extend his distaste for the quality of their individual and collaborative efforts into insinuations about their hidden political agenda. It is true that Mr. Lipman finds something sinister in the very concept of the avant-garde (he gets it confused with the counterculture), but it is particularly ominous to him that the editorial that called the Olympic Arts Committee's cancellation of Wilson's *the CIVIL warS* "a crime against the spirit" appeared in the Communist newspaper *L'Humanité*.

Perhaps it was this guilty association

Thomas Sowell on the writings of Karl Marx

Thomas Sowell, one of America's leading economists, now offers a step-by-step introduction to Karl Marx's historic system of ideas. For the uninitiated, the book will be invaluable. For the experts, Sowell examines current interpretations based on repetition instead of scholarship. His central theory is that Marxian philosophy must be understood before Marxian economics can be defined. In easy-to-follow style, he discusses Marx's theories of history, of capitalist "exploitation," of morality, and of the business cycle. Sowell also explains why Marxist thought has so profoundly influenced 20th-century politics—in ways that Marx himself neither anticipated nor would have sanctioned.

MARXISM

PHILOSOPHY AND ECONOMICS

THOMAS SOWELL

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that inspired him to say, on the basis of the brief "knee plays" fragments he saw in Minneapolis, that the work represents "a motley assortment of symbols drawn from the stock inventory of emotionally charged detritus floating about in every half-educated intellectual's mind." (For the record, I should mention that my theater is staging more of this "detritus" in late February and March, and that one of our current productions is also attacked at length in the current issue.) Similarly, he frowns on the Gandhi material in the Glass opera *Satyagraha* as "heavily fraught with anticipation of the American civil rights struggle of the Sixties," and the Patty Hearst sequence in the Glass/Wilson *Einstein on the Beach* as showing "that the Third World guerrilla movement was still with us," though he sensibly warns the more rabid readership against looking for any "orthodox, left-wing, state-oriented dispostion."

Lipman's political innuendoes are generously larded with aesthetic judgments ("the total tedium Glass's admirers call ecstasy," the "frightfully maudlin" ending of *Einstein* "iterated at stupifying length"), and he is greatly exercised by what he believes to be the unearned praise lavished on these works by a slavish press. At one point, he even identifies himself with Diogenes "trying to find not an honest man . . . but a performance of Glass or Wilson that would justify the hype." But it is soon manifestly clear that his real targets are not these "boring and amateurish" works but the social class that supports them, which he gleefully characterizes as an affluent congregation of narcissists irresistibly drawn to such "products of the counterculture and its fossil remnants." Inevitably, he also characterizes the "political cast" of this audience and its lapdog artists—"that beguiling, irresponsible variety of anarchism so endemic in an educated middle class which, no matter how existentially alienated, still wants someone else to pay for its amenities, whether these amenities be urban redevelopment or cultural offerings."

Mr. Lipman is disturbed that this "new class," which displays such a "loss of faith in transcendent order," should be enjoying artworks subsidized by corporations, foundations, and "most especially, governments." It was these audiences, here and abroad, and the critics ("especially those of the avant-garde stripe") who "convinced private and governmental backers" to support such "triviality," even though it confirmed "the new social class" in their anarchistic and skeptical beliefs. The BAM Next Wave Festival may be over—"but the grants go on." And we are down to the nitty-gritty at last—which is to say, funding.

I am not prepared to say whether Mr. Lipman's characterization of this "new social class" is correct. I have not met them all. And I hope his ears and eyes will someday be open to the beauties of the works he spurns, which I find infinitely haunting and spiritual. The issue is not Samuel Lipman's tastes or his political prejudices or even the harsh condemnatory tone he shares with so many people of similar persuasion—that tone of utter certainty and self-righteousness that informs so much criticism these days. No, the real issue is whether opinions of this kind will be translated into efforts to kill financial support for ambitious new works, without which they will be neither staged nor seen. *The New Criterion* identifies Samuel Lipman as the music critic for *Commentary*. What it fails to mention is that he is also a Reagan appointee to the National Council on the Arts, which has final approval over the grants awarded by the National Endowment. I am not suggesting that Mr. Lipman would use his powers to enforce his prejudices, or for purposes of retribution, but as long as the possibility is present the effect on the world of art will be chilling.

Will our own government agencies now use powers of economic censorship, monitoring works of art for their "anarchism" and "skepticism"? It is questions such as these that sometimes make you wonder how much we are coming to resemble "the other side."

A Poet In Prison

The True Confessions of an Albino Terrorist by Breyten Breytenbach

(Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 396 pp., $18.95)

Mouroir by Breyten Breytenbach

(Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 257 pp., $13.95)

South of the city of Cape Town lies a tranquil, almost rural, suburb named (after the wine) Tokai, and zoned for white occupation only. Driving through Tokai you pass, on your right, forest and vineyard, on your left comfortable houses with spacious lawns and gardens. Then at a certain point the suburban idyll ends, giving way to a monotonous gray wall ten feet high, behind which you can glimpse watchtowers and blank-faced buildings. This is Pollsmoor, a maximum-security prison, the home at present of Nelson Mandela, leader of the African National Congress and of many thousands of other folk, among them, until recently, one Breyten Breytenbach, poet, painter, and convicted "terrorist." *The True Confessions of an Albino Terrorist* is the story of how Breytenbach came to be in Pollsmoor, what he did there, and how he departed.

Breyten Breytenbach was born in 1939 into an ordinary small-town Afrikaner family. One of his brothers is an officer in the South African armed forces, another a well-known journalist. Breytenbach's comments on his brothers give an idea of how far he has moved from his origins: the one "a trained (and enthusiastic) killer," the other "a fellow traveller of the [Security Police], with decidedly fascist sympathies." Breyten, the maverick of the family, early made a name for himself in literary circles, and came to be seen as the leading poetic talent of his generation. Even after he left South Africa, took up residence in Paris, married a woman who would be called in Afrikaans *anderskleurig*—"of another color," meaning of a color other than white—and involved himself in the anti-apartheid movement, he remained the darling of much of the Afrikaans literary world. In 1973 he obtained official dispensation to visit his homeland. Au-

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diences at poetry readings gave him and his wife a rapturous welcome. The word in the air was "reconciliation." The prodigal son would yet return, the breach would be healed, and all would be well.

The next time Breytenbach visited South Africa, circumstances were different. He had shaved off his beard, and he carried a passport identifying him as Christian Galaska, citizen of France. His mission was to recruit members to Okhela, a resistance organization that had already embarrassed the West German government by stealing classified documents and revealing details of military cooperation between Bonn and Pretoria. Tipped off by an informer in Europe, the South African security police kept "Galaska" under surveillance for a while, then closed in and arrested him. At the end of a trial conducted in surprisingly subdued terms, Breytenbach was given a stiff nine-year sentence. (In *True Confessions* he claims that the authorities reneged on a deal to let him off lightly in return for not conducting a political defense.) He spent two years in isolation in Pretoria Central Prison, a spell from which he emerged with his sanity miraculously unimpaired, followed by five years in Pollsmoor. In 1982 he was released and flown off into exile in France.

The case of Breyten Breytenbach has troubled and continues to trouble Afrikaners. Breytenbach's position was, from the beginning, that he was in exile, that the reasons for his exile were political, and that only changes that would bring all political exiles home would bring him home. Afrikaner public opinion, on the other hand, particularly liberal opinion, has preferred to see his defection as a family matter, a generational quarrel within the greater Afrikaner family, to be sorted out within the family. To those who hold this view it remains possible for Breytenbach to be a great Afrikaans writer while still adopting the stance of a rebel. But in *True Confessions* Breytenbach spells out his position anew. He is not a rebel but a revolutionary, in will if not in deed. And he is no longer one of the family.

> To be an Afrikaner is a political definition. It is a blight and a provocation to humanity. . . . I do not consider myself to be an Afrikaner. To be an Afrikaner in the way *they* define it is to be a living insult to whatever better instincts we human beings may possess.

Given his unequivocal rejection of his Afrikaner birthright, why should Breytenbach have been treated by the police and prison authorities with the odd touches of indulgence, mixed in with all the harshness and cruelty, that we find described in this book? Breytenbach suggests that Red Cross and other international observers exerted a cautionary influence on his jailers. His own deliberately unheroic attitude ("Be pliant and weak when you have to. Cry if you must") may have contributed, too.

BUT I think there is a deeper reason. Prisoners in South Africa are not permitted to conduct economic activities from within jail. Breytenbach is a professional painter and writer. The letter of the law would have been on the side of the authorities if they had prohibited him from painting or writing in prison. In fact he was given permission to write, though not to paint. The works he wrote in prison were taken into custody as they were completed and returned to him on his release, *Mouroir* among them. The censors have allowed the publication of these works in South Africa. The public buys and reads them. They are honored with literary prizes. Why? Breytenbach writes:

> People who absolutely rejected me and my ideas and what my life stood for but who, perhaps from an obscure sense of uncomfortableness, if not guilt, and also, surely, because of a true concern for my work, applied to the minister to allow me to continue writing. "For the sake of Afrikaans literature." Was it a way for some of them to establish in their own minds their evenhandedness?

Perhaps. The fact is that, by the standards of the Afrikaans literary tradition, Breytenbach is a great poet. He is a poet, moreover, whose emotional makeup includes those feelings of passionate intimacy with the South African landscape, which, Afrikaners like to think, can be expressed only in Afrikaans, and therefore (here comes the sinister turn in the reasoning) can be experienced only by the Afrikaner. Closeness of fit between land and language is—so the reasoning proceeds—in some sense proof of the Afrikaner's natural ownership of the land. (Ideas like these are not new: natural congruence between a people, a language, and an ancestral landscape is a commonplace of German Romanticism.)

There is thus a considerable communal investment in the unity of the Afrikaans literary tradition—a tradition, let it not be forgotten, that is the occasion for a vast echoing ideological discourse in classrooms and cultural organs. There is a certain interest, even for official, establishment Afrikaans culture, to see Breytenbach as the bearer of a talent that he cannot, despite himself, betray; and to view his politics as an aberration that does not touch his poetic soul. There is an interest in not acknowledging that there can coexist in a single breast both a belief in a unitary democratic South Africa and a profound Afrikaans *digterskap*, "poet-ness." Hence the notion that the "terrorist" in Breytenbach can be incarcerated and punished while the poet in him can be left free. By acting as though Breytenbach must be a radically divided personality, one self a poet to be saved, the other self a traitor to be damned, the greater Afrikaner family preserves its belief (and perhaps does so sincerely and in good faith) that the language, the mystical nation-essence, is greater than the fallible vessels who bear it.

THE EMBRACE of the Afrikaner, stony yet loving, finds its expression in Breytenbach's account of the insufferable intimacy forced on him by his security police interrogators, in which compassion and cruelty seem at times pathologically intertwined. "I am convinced that some of the people they have killed in detention probably died when the interrogator was in a paroxysm of unresolved frustrations, even that the interrogator killed in an awkward expression of love and sympathy." The interrogators feed upon, and therefore depend upon, their prisoners. But Breytenbach extends the scope of the Hegelian master-slave dyad. What is the difference between the "true confession" he utters into a microphone in Palermo in 1983 and the "true confession" his interrogators demanded in Pretoria in 1975? Are not both of them answers to the question, "What is the truth of your mission to South Africa?"? Before the interrogator, before the microphone, before the blank page, Breytenbach finds himself in the same position, staring at himself. So he develops the mirror as the master metaphor of the book; and the most interesting passages are the dialogues he conducts with the figure in the mirror, which is variously the cruel interrogator, the "true" Breytenbach, and the dark brother-African:

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I see you now as my dark mirror-brother. We need to talk, brother I. I must tell you what it was like to be an albino in a white land. We are forever united by the ultimate knowledge of the depravity man will stoop to. Son of Africa. Azanians.

To his "dark mirror-brother" Breytenbach expresses his misgivings about the postrevolutionary South Africa of the future, which he foresees will fall under a no less totalitarian regime than the present one, and his bitterness against the "fat, institutionalized friends in the liberation movement" who sent him off on his foolhardy mission in the first place. Bitterness emerges even more strongly in his judgments on white South Africa: "Let that bloated village of civil servants and barbarians [Pretoria] be erased from the face of the earth." As he observes, one of the effects of prolonged isolation is to kill off parts of you, "and these parts will never again be revived."

What will survive of Breytenbach's *True Confessions*, I think, is not the narrative of capture, interrogation, and imprisonment, absorbing enough though that is, nor the apologia he gives for his quixotic foray into the fortress of the enemy, valuable though that is for its pages of analysis of the appeal of direct political action to the intellectual. A feature of Breytenbach's poetry is that it stops at nothing: there is no limit that cannot be exceeded, no obstacle that cannot be leaped, no commandment that cannot be questioned. His writing characteristically goes beyond, in more senses than one, what one had thought could be said in Afrikaans. The pages of *True Confessions* that stand out, that could have been written by no one else, are those in which he tries to feel his way into the experience of the condemned man, into the experience of death itself, and then into the moral world of the men who order deaths, build prisons, carry out tortures, and then into the very interior of the mad thinking of "security" itself.

Mouroir was written during Breytenbach's prison years. It is a more substantial work than *True Confessions*, but more difficult, and probably of less general appeal. In quality it is variable. Subtitled "Mirrornotes of a Novel," it consists of 38 pieces, some short, some long. Some are no more than *jeux*. Others are profoundly impressive in their evocation of a terminal landscape, a landscape from beyond

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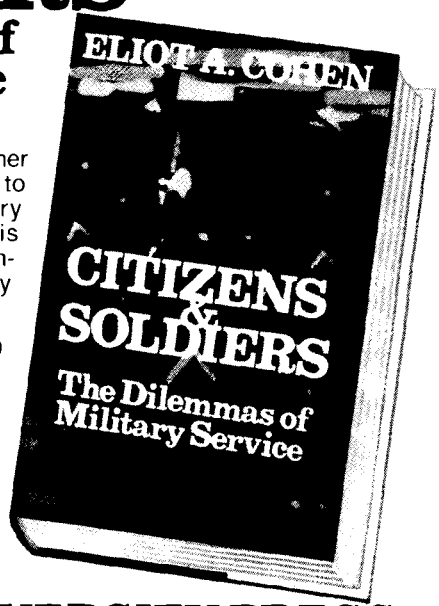

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the war, where children go about giving birdcalls to lure the fled birds back to the earth.

Certain of these pieces are linked closely enough for the reader to follow an erratic, dreamlike narrative line through them. In the main, however, one is hard put to form the pieces into the skeleton of any conceivable novel. One is better advised to read the book as an assemblage of stories, parables, meditations, and fragments, some of them revolving around the theme of imprisonment, death, and/or freedom, others linked by the recurrent figures of the mirror and the labyrinth (the title of course plays on *mourir*, to die, and *miroir*, mirror). It is not too fanciful to conceive of the text that Breytenbach has left us as a kind of Ariadne's thread that he spins behind him as he advances through the labyrinth of his fictions (and his dreams) toward a meeting with the monstrous Other who is also both the Self in the mirror and Death.

BUT A merging with the mirror-self is not achieved, the heart of the labyrinth is not attained. Instead, as in Jean Cocteau's Orpheus films, the surface of the mirror becomes a hole of entry into another world, into yet another branch of the labyrinth. Thus we find Breytenbach's text moving forward by a continual process of metamorphosis, particularly a metamorphosis of landscape. Though the process seems dreamlike, the forward movement is purposeful, the motivations are not obscure, the connections are present on the surface or not too far beneath it. It is a form of writing that pays its respects to Kafka and Nabokov (one of Breytenbach's alter egos is called Gregor Samsa). In technique it owes much to the *nouveau roman*, though its focus is less on surfaces, as in Robbe-Grillet and Simon, more on interiors and the properties of interiors: darkness, softness, wetness. Nevertheless, Breytenbach's voice is clearly his own.

The weakest sections are those in which Breytenbach works in the mode of the parable. When he deprives himself of the generative, metamorphosing powers of language and follows the more linear path of irony, the end results are thin. His irony only gains bite when he turns it on himself, as in the story about the radical writer who gives a press conference at the Rome airport before flying off to join the liberation struggle in South Africa: "Not in salons and ivory towers will revolutions be made. Purification in the struggle. Self-sacrifice. Freedom! (*Liberté!*) . . . Fierce fires in the pupils before the lashes are lowered."

How to write a revolutionary literature is a question to which *Mouroir* returns several times. One story deals with a writer who gives in to the pleas of friends and commences a conventional bourgeois tale of suburban adultery. It is hard, he discovers, to carry on writing when one's pants are soaked in horse blood. Nevertheless he plods on, in gathering darkness, till the fictional world he has created turns nasty, takes on a life of its own, and rends him. The bloody horse alluded to here becomes a complex, ambivalent, and recurrent symbol in *Mouroir* as a whole. In the richly meaningful cover Breytenbach designed for the Afrikaans edition, a naked pink (albino?) figure (the artist?) passes by a barred window, his head covered (replaced?) by the huge eyeless severed head of a horse: stalking horse, Trojan horse; also Minotaur, mirror-Taurus, figure of death from the dead center of the labyrinth; also the ludicrous counter-image of the warlike, passionate centaur.

A word must be said about the translation. There exists no Afrikaans edition of *True Confessions*. The edition we have must be accepted as a work written in English by Breytenbach. However, telltale solecisms indicate that Breytenbach is translating, and sometimes mistranslating, from an Afrikaans original. *Mouroir*, on the other hand, appeared in South Africa in 1983 in an edition partly in English but mainly in Afrikaans. Since no translator is named in the preliminaries to the American edition, we are justified in inferring that Breytenbach again did some or all of the translation; and the recurrence of idiosyncratic mistranslations tends to confirm this conclusion.

Still, while the translation of parts of *Mouroir* is nothing short of masterly, there are other parts where it is nothing short of inept. Examples: "And then he went away with the cancer" (instead of "And then he died of cancer"); "wire obstacle" (instead of "barbed wire entanglement"); "sucking black" (instead of "pitch-black"); "a sentence of grass" (instead of "a strip of grass"). These mistranslations emerge from a cursory check of a few odd-sounding passages. A careful check would, I am sure, produce hundreds more. Should it be revealed that what I call mistranslations are in fact creative reworkings by the author, I would have to reply that what we have been given to read remains a poor substitute for the original.

J. M. COETZEE

J. M. Coetzee is the author, most recently, of *Life and Times of Michael K* (Viking).

CLASSICAL GASS

Habitations of the Word: Essays by William H. Gass

(Simon and Schuster, 317 pp., $17.95)

In the flurry of contemporary speculations about language and reality, with most of the headwinds blowing from France, William Gass has developed something of a reputation as a homegrown American theorist. This is the third collection of essays he has published in the past dozen years on the elusive relationship between words and worlds, fictions and their referential objects.

To the extent that one can discern a general critical argument in this latest compilation, there appears to be a shift in emphasis from Gass's earlier essays. A decade ago, he was typically insisting with acerbic wit that novels are made out of nothing but words, or even, that what any writer finally cares about is words and words alone. Now, perhaps because the post-Structuralists have made this stress on the sheer textuality of texts rather uncomfortably fashionable, Gass strives to recover a sense of lived individual experience embodied in, or rather transmuted into, literary texts. In accord with this sense, he passionately argues, contrary to Decon-

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structive notions, that what is primary in the literary use of language is not writing but the pulsating presence of the spoken word, reworked and heightened in the formal complexities of a literary style.

There is much musing here, in a baroque mood and mode, on the painful transience of human existence, and so the effort to get life into words, "The Soul Into the Sentence" (as one of the essays is called), is seen as the most urgent and poignant of undertakings. Here is Gass, sounding this theme at his eloquent best in the long lead-essay on Emerson that is probably the strongest piece in the book:

> In fact, in time, the dross body drops away, the peevish tongue is still, greed is gone because the gut is, vanities collapse with the lungs, the long competition with the Great concludes, the very arcs of energy and impotence, of which Emerson so often complains, finally slow and cease like a swing with an empty seat, and our author is at last that: the lonely words of his work.

This is fine writing because the person who has framed these sentences obviously reads with his whole imagination—from the base of the spine, as Nabokov liked to tell his students—and knows what is involved existentially in both writing and reading, and how to translate that knowledge into answering cadences, images, alliterative stresses.

WHAT IS peculiar about *Habitations of the Word*, running counter to prevalent conceptions of the kind of writer Gass might be, is that there is so little clear or consecutive thinking in it. It may be possible, by an athletic feat of exegesis, to wrest from these essays a "theoretical position" on mimesis, artifice, and the status of language, but if such a position is there at all, it exists in hints and winks and ellipses and teasing allusions, never as a sustained argument. *Habitations of the Word* virtually invites judgment not as a pursuit of discernible ideas but as a stylistic performance, a series of verbal improvisations on fairly simple themes. Indeed, as one progresses in the volume, it becomes increasingly difficult to make out any real subject in individual essays, or any subject that is more than a banality. Thus, "Tropes of the Text" conveys little more than the idea that different fictional texts offer different metaphors (autobiography, letters, etc.) for their own textual existence. "And" tells us that the English conjunction means different things in different contexts. "On Talking to Oneself" argues what we have all known since childhood, that we constantly talk to ourselves in varying voices, emulating different models of oral delivery. "On Reading to Oneself" suggests, unexceptionally, that there is a big difference between the leisurely pleasures of reading and the pinched purposefulness of skimming. By the time we get to essays like "The Origin of Extermination in the Imagination" and "The Death of the Author," the subject dissolves entirely into the writer's associative gambits, rhetorical gyrations, catalogs of illustrations, and anecdotal asides.

IF GASS the essayist is to be judged as a performer, not as an analyst or thinker, how good a show does he put on? He has obviously been reading the English prose masters of the early 17th century, particularly Sir Thomas Browne, whom he quotes several times; and his own self-conscious aim is to write like a contemporary Browne. In bits and pieces, he manages to do this quite wonderfully. Here, for example, is Gass in the essay on Emerson meditating on the contradictions of life through one of those catalogs of vivid instances and concluding with a finely balanced ringing aphorism in the best 17th-century manner:

> But life is not all eloquence and adulation: life is wiping the baby's bum; it is a bad case of the croup; it is quarrels with one's spouse; it is disappointment, distraction, indignities by the dozen; it is the death of friends, wife, son, and brothers, carried off like fluff in the wind; it is alien evenings, cold stairwells, frosty sheets, lack of love; for what does the great spirit need that touches the body but the touch of the body, as oratory needs silence, and revolution peace? We are nourished by our absences and opposites; contraries quench our thirst.

Between such moving moments of genuine eloquence, Gass is almost always lively and inventive, tossing bright images into the air and spinning them in surprising directions. A formidable speed-reader remembered from boyhood "had a head of thin red hair like rust on a saw; he screwed a suggestive little finger into his large fungiform ears. He was made of rust, moss, and wax. . . ." Senescence and death are made vivid to the mind's eye through the following metaphorical terms: "Wrinkles squeeze our eyes shut, and we slide into sleep like a sailor from beneath his national flag."

THIS last example hints at the defect of a virtue in Gass's style that elsewhere obliterates the virtue altogether. There is often rather too much going on in his games of figuration, which is to say that the gamesman works a little too hard displaying his own adroitness. The frequent result is mere cuteness instead of expressive force, the image calling attention to itself at the expense of the idea, feeling, or object it is supposed to illuminate. Thus, Gass refers to the power of thought to disclose "the very body of the world—God's doll, God's Marilyn Monroe." To make the point that the realist novel is a constructed world, not just an account of the world, he observes: "*Madame Bovary* is not a chair for a fat burger's Sunday snooze; it *is* the fat burger himself, breaded and greasy and mostly buns. His home is a White Castle." (Among other difficulties, the flippant vulgarity of all this gives no sense of the beautiful aesthetic finish with which Flaubert represented the bourgeois world he despised. The odious Monsieur Homais's home is the lovely structure of *Madame Bovary* in which he is trapped, not a White Castle.) To illustrate the Freudian notion of separation trauma—and several of these essays conjure with crudely reductive versions of psychoanalytic concepts—Gass writes, "I want to be *me* the way my mother's body was before her treachery, and the nipple came away in my mouth like [sic] a handle in a surprised hand breaks from its satchel, or a button spits out its cloth."

William Gass is clearly a writer willing to take chances with his prose. There are, as I have suggested, real gains in such freewheeling inventiveness. But the casting aside of inhibitions also means that unconscious materials are constantly popping through the surface of the writing, often in ways that subvert its effectiveness. Images of disjunct body parts and disease are frequent, even when the link with their objects of reference is questionable ("thirst and hunger and hope return and return like a tubercular cough"). The prose is blotched with a cloacal obsession, the excretory functions being deemed the aptest image for most things. Thoughts of mortality: "The freshly dead dog us; their corpses fill

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our thoughts like stool packed in the bowel." The return of the repressed: "that name on the tip of the tongue . . . suddenly explodes like a fart in the mouth." The human predisposition to transform everything: "What I am emptying my bladder of, behind that tree in that neglected park, was once a nice hot cup of green tea." Such images tempt one to psychological conjecture, but I will resist the temptation. The main point, in any case, is that Gass is a spectacular, and spectacularly uneven, writer. Though he works under academic auspices, sometimes with footnotes and with reference to both philosophers and literary theorists, he has increasingly assumed the posture of a zanily serious prose-poet vamping on intellectual themes. At his best, he can call up the power of a master of English prose, but his overreach for originality often carries him to the brink of bad taste, bathos, and plain imprecision.

ROBERT ALTER

Robert Alter's most recent book is *Motives for Fiction* (Harvard University Press).

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CHOICE AND COERCION

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(Yale University Press, 279 pp., $27)

The Burden of Brown: Thirty Years of School Desegregation by Raymond Wolters

(University of Tennessee Press, 358 pp., $24.95)

The Little Rock Crisis: A Constitutional Interpretation by Tony Freyer

(Greenwood Press, 186 pp., $27.95)

The 30th anniversary of the Supreme Court's 1954 *Brown* decision prompted innumerable analyses and commentaries last year, but few celebrations. Perhaps we are still too close to these events to grasp the scale and significance of the transformation that occurred in American public schools during the three decades since Chief Justice Earl Warren declared on behalf of a unanimous court that "separate educational facilities are inherently unequal." Perhaps the stain on the national character that we thereupon set out to erase was so large and shameful that even its substantial elimination could not yield more than a limited sense of relief, the kind we associate with remission of a dread disease or arrest of a much-wanted criminal.

Yet de jure segregation is now well behind us. What is more, a measure of actual "integration" has occurred in our public schools, most of it within the past 15 years. As recently as 1968, two out of three black youngsters attended schools that were virtually all black. By 1980 only one in three did so; in the South fewer than one in four. Less but still palpable progress was made (save for the Northeast) in the proportion of black children attending majority white schools. In 1968 just 23 percent did so; by 1980 this had risen to 37 percent.

Of course those numbers also mean that most black youngsters still attend predominantly black schools, even though they are not barred from enrolling elsewhere. The reasons for this enduring "racial isolation" are familiar.

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Few families live in racially mixed neighborhoods, few families like to send their kids to a distant school unless the resulting education will be lots better, and if the local authorities start making things too complicated, it's always possible (if you've got the resources) to move to the next town or put your kids into private schools.

No doubt there's some lingering racial prejudice in all this—perhaps quite a lot. But far more powerful, I believe, at least within the huge American middle class, is the nearly uncontrollable impulse to enroll one's sons and daughters in a school that is safe, orderly, and educationally effective. This is so for all races and backgrounds.

Barring an unexpected (albeit desirable) social transformation so sweeping as to eradicate race-correlated income disparities and integrate the residential neighborhoods of every city and suburb, there are really only two ways to increase integration in the public schools. You can markedly upgrade the quality or distinctiveness of educational offerings in certain schools, thus making them more attractive to families that do not reside nearby. Or you can curb the freedom of families to flee schools that they do not like, and apply more coercion to assign youngsters to schools they would not choose. Both strategies call for busing (or other means of transporting children to distant places); but in the former instance those boarding the buses will be volunteers, in the latter they will be conscripts.

The strategy of integration-via-school-improvement was already under way in many communities—typically through development of "magnet" schools—when it was overtaken by the broader "education excellence" crusade that has swept the land in the past two years. This powerful impulse to raise standards for schools, teachers, and students alike is entirely "color-blind" and has little to do directly with racial integration. It seeks to ensure, in effect, that every child will attend a "good" school where he will be prodded and cajoled to the limits of his ability by able teachers and solid courses of study in an orderly and purposeful setting.

The effects on integration, however, may be mixed. If the "average" school—especially the ordinary urban public school—begins to be viewed as both safe and pedagogically effective, middle-class families will be less inclined to abandon it. That will result in more integration. But if the move toward higher standards leads to greater failure rates for black youngsters, to a heightened dropout rate, or to rigid "tracking" within schools, then the proportion of black youngsters attending class with white children could decline. Such an outcome is by no means foreordained, but preventing it will take substantial time, resources, and special attention to the educational needs of children who were having trouble enough when standards were low or nonexistent.

Coercion is indisputably a faster, surer, and tidier means of integrating schools, if that is your main goal. But for a mathematically based, nonvoluntary integration scheme to work precisely as planned, all exits must be sealed and all alternatives eliminated. Jennifer Hochschild's startling book is a straightforward argument for that degree of coercion. She contends that Gunnar Myrdal was naive in viewing racism as an aberration within the American experience that could be—and in time would be—wiped out by liberal democracy. As Myrdal saw it in the 1940s, the "American dilemma" was not a fixed structural element of the society nor a hopeless ideological clash within the polity, but rather a manageable conflict inside the nation's heart. "America," he wrote, "is constantly reaching for . . . democracy at home and abroad. The main trend in its history is the gradual realization of the American Creed. . . . America can demonstrate that justice, equality and cooperation are possible between white and colored people. . . . America is free to choose whether the Negro shall remain her liability or become her opportunity." Eventually, Myrdal prophesied, our fundamental values and best instincts would express themselves in incremental social change, and our great dilemma would be resolved.

This view, Hochschild contends, was foolishly optimistic. Racism is not, to her mind, anomalous, it is not fundamentally incompatible with liberal democracy, and thus it will not be gradually eradicated through the political process. Instead, racial prejudice has a "symbiotic" relationship with American society, which Hochschild does not in

Arles: The Bulls

Bull after bull, I kept one
hand on the stone,
thinking of the cool quarries
of Gaul laid open
centuries ago for this—

a matador bungling the coup
de grace more
clumsily each time, the swordblade
buckling on raw
bone, the bull gashed, prodded

to distraction by the picadors,
and now forced
kneeling to the sand, gasping for air,
the crowd poised
swaying like a rotten harvest in the glare.

For the space of one slow death I walked
under the dark
arena, touching each stone-barreled
archway as they took
another bull out to be felled.

When the crowd drifted away downhill
the bulls were hauled
on chains, hung up and hoisted to a cart,
the block and tackle
groaning as the winch drew taut.

His back to me, a man stood
sluicing the concrete,
blood thinning to water, disappearing
through an iron grate
set in the ground. Lying

awake that night, I heard it running
through the sewers
under us, and saw it fall,
the watery bloodstream slipping
through the dark under us all.

Peter Sacks

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any case find all that liberal or even very democratic. Instead she finds us smug, repressive, and immutably class-riddled, a society that maintains its patterns of privilege by keeping people in their places, that uses school segregation as an important means to this end, and that cannot be altered by an exercise of popular will or moral determination precisely because the majority of Americans would never consent to it.

ONCE one is persuaded by this kind of reasoning that the great majority of Americans are dyed-in-the-wool racists who will buttress their privilege and retain their prejudice from one generation to the next by blocking any true integration of the schools, one faces a clear choice: abandon school integration as a hopeless cause, thereby also relinquishing hope for the just society of which integrated schools would be both source and symbol, or abandon democratic processes and turn school integration into an end so important as to justify whatever means may be required to effect it.

Faced with this "new American dilemma," as she terms it, Hochschild does not flinch: "Only substantial change authoritatively imposed has a chance to vanquish the well-fortified citadel of institutional racism." While confessing that she is a bit "reluctant to jettison popular control," she is clear that "democracy must give way to liberalism," the latter defined as the conferring on all citizens of "rights" that a majority of their fellow citizens would not voluntarily accord them.

Professor Hochschild offers no specific scheme for integrating the schools, but she suggests four maxims, all of which she acknowledges are "nonincremental and not responsive to popular wishes."

"Whenever possible, desegregate a metropolitan region." Oblige the state to amalgamate school districts into such large units that people cannot readily elude integration by moving out of them.

"Do not worry about minimizing busing times or distances." No matter that "most Anglos and many Hispanics and blacks will object vociferously to this . . . citizens' preferences for incremental changes (at most) must be ignored if desegregation is to succeed."

"Change practices, personnel, and presumptions within the schools." It little avails to integrate the building if prejudice endures inside its classrooms. So disregard the stated interests of teachers' unions, of the parents of gifted students, even of black and Hispanic politicians. "Interest group pluralism," Hochschild says, only "reinforces incremental change" and must therefore be "overcome for desegregation to succeed."

"National, local, and especially school leaders must lead." This unexceptionable maxim, applied to desegregation, means not only that community leaders should alter rather than follow popular sentiments, but also that they should brook no opposition, for their cause is just and the police take orders from them.

How is all this actually to be put into practice? There Hochschild grows vague, save for repeated use of the word "authoritative" to describe the governmental processes that will supplant the consent of the governed. Mainly, it appears, we will rely on the courts and on "appointees," since elected officials cannot be counted upon to impose unpopular measures on their constituents. "Judges and bureaucrats," she sarcastically concludes, "may be the least desirable agents for effecting desegregation success, except for legislators, mayors, presidents, and the general citizenry."

It matters not that a good portion of that disgruntled citizenry is black—the putative beneficiaries of integration. Hochschild acknowledges that "black support of desegregation has declined in the past two decades," that many blacks are uneasy about busing, and that most Hispanics oppose it. She concedes that "blacks are increasingly willing to speak out . . . against mandatory desegregation" and in favor of neighborhood schools. She even notes that "the few blacks who can afford to do so are joining whites in their flight to the suburbs or private schools."

Yet all this should not deter us, for blacks may not themselves appreciate what a good thing desegregation is. Forget the arguments—propounded half a century ago by W.E.B. Du Bois, more recently by William Raspberry, Derrick Bell, and others—that the foremost educational need of minority youngsters is to attend really good schools. They do not know what is best for them: "Isolated blacks and Hispanics cannot learn to defend against or overcome white prejudice and will be

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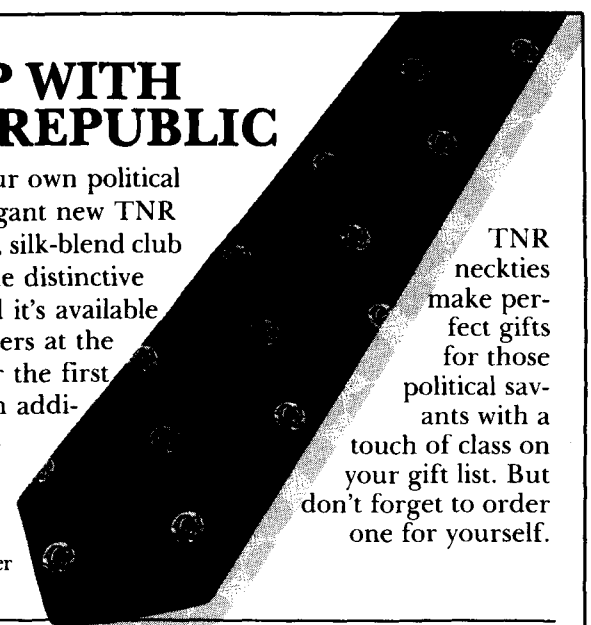

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unprepared to live in a society in which they will remain exceptions to the norms." No matter that the jury is still out on how much more black youngsters actually learn in integrated classrooms. (No one argues that either blacks or whites learn less, or that there are not collateral social benefits from integration per se. But the evidence about changes in educational achievement remains ambiguous.) This cuts no ice with Hochschild. In her view, forcing an end to racism—at least obliging school children to sit in the same rooms with youngsters of other races—is a more important social objective than honoring the values and priorities of the members of all races.

PROFESSOR Hochschild has inadvertently done the cause of school desegregation a grave harm by concluding that significant progress cannot possibly be made through democratic means. For if one accepts her view that progress must not be expected through the exercise of conventional political processes, nor through heightened moral awareness and increased tolerance within the American population, then one must either jettison the goal of integration or urge the courts to take far bolder action than has thus far proven constitutionally warranted or publicly acceptable. The judiciary would first have to relinquish two well-established doctrines: that desegregation may only be ordered where there is evidence that the city or state once engaged in actions designed to foster segregation, i.e., that there can only be a remedy where there was a governmental misdeed, not simply because people settled in separate neighborhoods; and that (at least in the North, where state governments never mandated dual school systems) involuntary desegregation plans must be confined to individual school systems and may not embrace nearby towns that never did anything but provide nonsegregated schools for those living within their boundaries. So long as court-ordered desegregation is construed as a remedy for specific constitutional violations rather than as a means of achieving specified social ends, progress in the direction Hochschild favors will be halting and uneven at best.

Raymond Wolters contends that the courts have already done immense damage both to the cause of desegregation and to the quality of education for whites and blacks alike. They should, in his view, back off. *The Burden of Brown* is a close look at what actually transpired during the past 30 years in the five communities directly involved in the 1954 Supreme Court decisions. "Integration," Wolters concludes, "has been a failure in four of the five *Brown* school districts." (The partial exception was Topeka itself, the community of Linda Brown.) In the District of Columbia, Prince Edward County (Virginia), Clarendon County (South Carolina), and New Castle County (Delaware), Wolters found evidence of massive white flight to the suburbs and to private schools, leading to "resegregation" as the public schools became predominantly black. He found evidence of declining academic performance among the youngsters in practically all schools. And he encountered widespread unhappiness, disillusionment, and frustration among residents of those communities, notwithstanding the elapse of three decades.

The reason, he concludes, was not the elimination of legal segregation, but the many actions subsequently taken in the name of racial balancing. Busing, the redistribution of financial and educational resources from good schools to poor ones, volatile changes in district organization and management, homogenization of academic standards (such that they were lowered in some schools even as they were elevated in others), obliviousness to parental concerns, and general disorder and confusion in many school buildings—all sped the exodus from these school systems of middle-class families who felt strongly about education and could create alternatives for themselves.

THE transformation of basic school desegregation doctrine from color-blindness to renewed color-consciousness parallels the redefinition of civil rights that has occurred in practically every domain of American social policy in the years since *Brown* and particularly in the years since the Civil Rights Act of 1964. This Wolters acknowledges but deplores. He tracks the change to a fundamental ambiguity in the 1954 opinion, namely the central proposition that racially separate education is *per se* unequal. As reinterpreted by the Supreme Court itself in 1968 and in many cases since, Walters observes, "an opinion that had previously been understood to forbid pupil assignment on the basis of race paradoxically became the rationale for requiring assignment on the grounds of race." Post-1954 court holdings in all five of the *Brown* districts "have repeatedly prohibited educational policies that are neutral on their face," such as freedom to choose among schools and even student ability grouping within schools.

IN ONE respect Wolters echoes Jennifer Hochschild's analysis. Ever more compulsion, he observes, is the inexorable outcome of a desegregation strategy that abjures voluntarism and forswears educational quality as the chief requisite of schooling for both black and white. Hochschild knows this, and urges more coercion. Wolters instead asks that the definition of desegregation be restored to what "most people thought it meant" between 1954 and 1968: "the prohibition of official racial discrimination, not the prohibition of racially neutral policies that do not lead to a substantial amount of racial mixing."

Tony Freyer's subtle but detailed chronicle of the great Little Rock desegregation crisis of the late 1950s suggests that the real world is a good bit messier than either Hochschild or Wolters believes, and that it does not respond well to simple nostrums. Those who recall the stark scenes of federal troops holding back the mobs as a few blacks cautiously entered Central High School under court order in September 1957 may suppose that coercion alone can yield integration, and that Hochschild must therefore be correct. Those who believe that such tactics lead to ruined schools and fractured communities may instead agree with Wolters. Yet what brought the Little Rock episode to a reasonably satisfactory conclusion within two years was what Freyer calls "a reassertion of local moderate business and civic leadership, building upon federal judicial authority."

Only when cool heads came to constitute a majority on the Little Rock school board did the troops leave, the schools reopen, and the antics of various state and national politicians give way to a reassertion of educational priorities and democratic values. By 1981, Freyer reports, "Central High was a model of integration, and its honor roll black student body president was on the way to becoming a freshman at Yale University." Today the public schools of Arkansas are in the news not because of racial conflict, but because an education-

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minded young governor is insisting that all teachers pass a test of basic literacy before being allowed in the classrooms with children of any race. Yet this manifest progress through political channels would not have been made, Freyer argues, had the federal courts not forced an end to de jure segregation.

As we look to the future, can we expect that more communities will devise strategies that will foster both racial integration and educational quality without abandoning democratic processes? Though the level of outright conflict over racial matters is much reduced, demography is becoming a more formidable barrier than either politics or jurisprudence. About 30 American cities now have a majority black and Hispanic population. In some public school systems there are simply not enough white youngsters to spread around. Whether this is the consequence of desegregation measures or of larger socioeconomic and demographic changes is largely academic. The schools in such communities cannot be significantly integrated so long as residential patterns and municipal boundaries remain as they are today. Anyone seriously interested in the educational well-being of the boys and girls who attend them had best concentrate on the quality of their curriculum and teaching and the rigor of their standards. That is precisely what such able superintendents as Atlanta's Alonzo Crim and the District of Columbia's Floretta McKenzie have set about to do. They have observed (and ample research confirms) that it isn't necessary to enroll white youngsters in your classroom in order to run first-rate schools—and that if the schools become good enough the white Yuppies may even begin to move their children into them.

OTHER communities have recently achieved something close to stable integration in their public schools, usually after some years of turmoil and white flight. The Charlotte-Mecklenburg schools come to mind, as do those of Nashville. Typically these are middle-sized cities and towns, not so sprawling as to make the bus routes horrendous, even where (as in the two examples I cited) the municipal and surrounding county systems have been amalgamated. The communities are still living under court-approved busing plans, to be sure, and a lot of whites have left, but the schools are no longer in turmoil.

With black birth rates high, Hispanic birth rates higher, and immigration at flood tide, American public schools at the end of the century are going to be markedly less white than they are today. In many places it is going to be difficult to preserve whatever degree of school integration currently exists, let alone to increase it. Hochschild-like coercion might be one approach, but it seems unlikely that any branch of government is going to take her advice. Indeed, one of the most notable developments in several recent desegregation cases has been the appeals to the judges from black parents who do not want more busing. In the case of Hispanic families, of course, matters are complicated by the politics of bilingualism, which often verges onto ethnic separatism, a far cry indeed from integration.

It is always risky to predict what the Supreme Court might do. Since neither the executive branch nor Congress has built much of a record of courage, consistency, or forthrightness in this domain over the decades, the court has generally been left to determine what will finally happen. It isn't likely that the justices will reverse as many decisions as would be required to follow Wolter's lead, but it's even harder to imagine them becoming as "authoritative" as Hochschild urges.

Probably we'll continue to muddle through the desegregation issue, doing a little good here and a bit of damage there. Where we might make an immense difference, however, for children of every hue and heritage, is in the quality of teaching and learning in the schools they do attend. The "excellence movement" in American education is color-blind in inspiration; what is crucial is that it remain color-blind in execution. With care and some well-targeted resources, it could yield substantially increased achievement levels among practically all students, not just middle-class white ones. Crummy schools, one might conclude, are inherently unequal. That may not be a constitutional doctrine. But if we moved as far away from educational mediocrity—for all youngsters—in the next 30 years as we have from racial segregation in the past 30, that would be cause for at least a modest celebration in 2015.

CHESTER E. FINN JR.

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SINGING SURFACES

Matisse
by Pierre Schneider
translated by Michael Taylor and Bridget Strevens Romer

(Rizzoli/New York, 752 pp., $95)

In the whole panorama of modern art, the achievement of Matisse is the most difficult to describe in words. His experimental canvases, painted before the end of World War I, with their uncompromising search for radical solutions to visual problems, shock us even today. Although the literature on Matisse, both scholarly and popular, is vast, none of it so far has succeeded in really locating and expressing the essence of his art. Alfred Barr's meticulous, factual, but rather dry year-by-year account of the life and work, which appeared in 1954, is thoroughly reliable, but we have been waiting for a new big book that would explain it all.

Well, here it is with a vengeance. A prize to any reader who can finish it in a week: Pierre Schneider, the German-born, American-educated, and (for many years) Paris-based art historian and critic, has given us a 750-page book that weighs nearly ten pounds. It is a maddeningly wandering text. Schneider surrounds his subject with an army of intellectual forces: theology, metaphysics, existentialism, epistemol-

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ogy, philosophy of history, the psychology of the unconscious, the history of both Western and Oriental art, semiotics, and modern literary theory are just some of the battalions with which Schneider seeks to conquer the contradictions and enigmas of Matisse's elusive career. It is a surprise, to this reader at least, that Pierre Schneider generally succeeds. Wading through this repetitive, self-indulgent, seemingly endless text, with its monumental digressions and its constant displays of a would-be universal *philosophe* showing off his erudition, a synthesis nevertheless begins to emerge. It is probably the best account of both the artist Matisse and the intellectual underpinnings of modernism that has yet been written.

But oh, the overkill. In discussing the simultaneous presence in Manet's work of pictorial depth and surface brushwork, Schneider says that for Manet "painting and reality are, to employ the admirable definition of the two natures of Christ put forth by the Council of Chalcedon, 'incompatible and inseparable.' " This he follows by a long footnote on the council and the disputes of the Aryans and Monophysites, the Gnostics and the Neoplatonists, concluding that

> If the Council of Chalcedon's decision became the central doctrine of the Church is it not because the 'two-in-one' on which it is founded is one of the fundamental structures of Western civilization? In this sense Manet went back to a tradition established between the third and twelfth centuries, the originality of which later ceased to be recognized.

Schneider claims at the outset that he began with no clear structure in mind at all. Instead, like Matisse himself, he just followed wherever his path seemed to lead. Just as Matisse's work is antihistorical, in the sense that it aspires to be timeless and above history, so our author claims, with partial justification, that Matisse's work is a unity from beginning to end and should be discussed thematically rather than temporally.

Still, the disorganization of the book is very disconcerting. The text is seldom correlated in any but the most casual way with the pictures. Many paintings are discussed substantively but not reproduced at all, and most of the numerous illustrations we are given are not even mentioned in the text. The choice of plates is very curious as well. Schneider reproduces a great many paintings and drawings, but by no means all of the principal and familiar masterworks we know from earlier publications, and he greatly expands the visual repertoire with a large number of works we have not seen before. One is grateful for all this new material, but much of it, which comes from the artist's estate, is unfinished and of insignificant quality within the whole oeuvre. As in the great Matisse exhibition at the Grand Palais in Paris in 1970, for which he was narrator, Schneider unreasonably favors and stresses the earliest paintings—those done before the Fauve outburst in 1905, when Matisse's career really began.

HENRI MATISSE BY CARTIER-BRESSON

Schneider's basic thesis, which runs as a leitmotiv through chapter after chapter, is that Matisse, beginning from the various sources that influenced him (Impressionism, Neo-Impressionism, Courbet, Cézanne and the Orientals), always sought a synthesis between a subject depicted in depth, as is traditional in Western painting, and an abstraction of the flatness on the painted surface. According to Schneider, he is the culmination of a continuous yearning for such a synthesis among most of the advanced artists of the second half of the 19th century who wanted to break with traditional academic painting. For Matisse the method lay in color, and it was derived from an Orientalism inspired by Muslim art and a frank willingness to allow the decorative to dominate in his work. He saw his whole career as an effort to infuse such "joy of life" into his canvases, through color and arabesques, that they would achieve a spirituality which for Schneider, if not for Matisse, is a surrogate for the tribal God of our civilization who died at the beginning of Modernism. (*Joy of Life* is the title of the great seminal Fauve painting he made in 1905, now in the Barnes Collection.)

The fact that this is an "authorized" book about Matisse, written with the cooperation of the family and with full access to its archives, is a mixed blessing, as it usually turns out to be in such cases. Not only is the selection of plates a somewhat political choice, but the biographical account of Matisse the man, the husband, the father of children, the self-conscious member of the *haute bourgeoisie*, is incomplete and bowdlerized. Still, the valuable profusion of new information about the work, as well as

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the new anecdotes about the life, more than compensates for any "insider" bias that has crept into the text. Schneider may well owe some of his analysis of the deepest wellsprings of Matisse's art, and of creativity in general, to discussions with the late Georges Dutuit, a philosopher and art critic who married Matisse's daughter, Marguerite, in 1923.

NONETHELESS, Schneider's intimate familiarity with family archives and correspondence has not prevented numerous bloopers in the text. The 1911 painting "The Conversation," now in Leningrad, the analysis of which Schneider uses as an introduction to the argument of the entire book, cannot have the alternative date of 1916, as he claims Mme. Matisse once suggested, since it had to have been delivered to Shchukin, Matisse's great Moscow patron, before the outbreak of the First World War. Schneider has Matisse visiting the National Gallery in Washington, which was founded in 1937, during his visit to the United States in 1930. Others, in more appropriate contexts, will comb the text for mistakes of more significance than these minor editorial lapses. But the author's tendency to accept Matisse's sometimes contradictory statements at face value can lead to misunderstanding. Matisse claimed, for instance, that he was not a collector, yet he owned several important Courbets, at least four paintings by Cézanne and seven of his watercolors (which are not mentioned by Schneider), Derains, Soutines, Picassos, Marquets, Renoirs, and more.

The extensive use of Matisse's own statements about the sources and the meaning of his art, however, are the armature on which the whole book rests. Schneider's interweaving of these succinct and eloquent paragraphs with his own extended amplifications is brilliant and provoking. By close reading one can catch glimpses of that synthesis of depth and abstraction that Schneider insists unifies Matisse's life work. For example, in his famous "Notes of a Painter" written in 1908, Matisse says, "What I am after, above all, is expression." Many years later, Georges Dutuit quotes the artist: "Expression and decoration are simply one and the same thing."

Occident and Orient were the terms Matisse used to designate the two great poles between which his art swung. The Occident, the European tradition of painting since Giotto, stood for the probity of drawing, for observation of the real world, for nuance, shading, depth, and half-tones. The Orient (or Oceania, as Matisse sometimes called it) stood for color, flat-patterns, arabesques, and pure light. At each period of his long life, as he seemed to lean more heavily toward one or the other of these traditions, or to grow complacent in his apparently successful solutions, Matisse would change direction, renew his art, take enormous new risks, and begin again his great search for a synthesis. Schneider feels that the last works, the large paper cutouts, are the final epiphany that he had always sought. In the end, Matisse abandoned the Occident and surrendered to pure intense color, to the flatness of the picture surface, to the decorator as an apotheosis of the artist, to the most intense light, as Schneider claims, in the whole history of art.

As Roger Fry already noted in 1929,

> Henri Matisse's style is based on equivoque and ellipsis. So far as I know, in the history of European art no one has ever played so many delightful, unexpected, exhilarating variations upon the theme of the dual nature of painting as he has.

The radicality of his art lies precisely in its elusiveness and, although Pierre Schneider struggles mightily and magnificently to define and interpret the content of that art, it defies his efforts. In the end, I am happy to report, it remains an enigma.

EUGENE VICTOR THAW

Eugene Victor Thaw, an art dealer in New York, is co-author of *Jackson Pollock: A Catalogue Raisonné of Paintings, Drawings, and Other Works* (Yale University Press).

A GIRL AND AN EMPEROR

Cranes at Dusk
by Hisako Matsubara
translated by Leila Vennewitz

(The Dial Press/Doubleday, 320 pp., $15.95)

An expatriate novelist typically writes in his own language about foreign experience. Yet there is nothing typical about Hisako Matsubara, who grew up in Kyoto the daughter of a Shinto priest, became a priest herself, and five years after a move to Germany (her husband is a German scientist) was writing her own column in *Die Zeit*. In *Cranes at Dusk*, the second of her novels to be translated from German into English, she is writing in a late-acquired language about remembered Japanese experience, and it is not easy to sort out the kinds of foreignness one feels, and delights in, as her reader. The novel is at least partly autobiographical—the story of Saya, the ten-year-old daughter of a Kyoto priest who watches her country adjust (sadly, comically, heroically, but above all quickly) to its defeat in World War II. Saya learns too, in the face of personal grief, to begin to love life again, in the affirmative Shinto tradition of her father.

What gives *Cranes at Dusk* its curious foreign cast is the sense that it has been written by at least two people. It is a novel so episodic and fragmentary, bound more by poetic motifs than plot development, that Saya does not emerge as the certain protagonist for many pages. Often I had to remind myself that these highly Japanese effects (skillfully translated by Leila Vennewitz) were not translated from the Japanese. Yet just as often it seemed that only a Westerner who happened to live in Japan as a child could have understood so well which facts of Japanese life need be explicated for Western readers. I suspect many Japanese would find the opening pages of the novel—in which the Kyoto silk weavers' quarter listens in horrified disbelief to the emperor's announcement of surrender on the public address system—about as predictable as we would find a description of some average American citizens' reactions to Pearl Harbor. But Matsubara allows us, her Western readers, to share another shock: for the Japanese, hearing the divine emperor's human, high-pitched voice for the first time was a separate event from—indeed, an added blow

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to—the surrender it declared.

Once she is introduced, Saya—because she is a child, and yet a precocious one—becomes an ideal vehicle for illustrating the naiveté of the Japanese in meeting their conquerors. Noting an American woman's lacquered fingernails, Saya wonders whether they naturally grew in red; her little brother Bo asks a Christian pastor why he is wearing a "bib." But the adults have their own childlike theories about the race they call "the hairy ones." A pawnbroker claims that the men with red hair and green eyes are the fiercest in battle, and the area warden offers this definition of the new form of government: "Democracy is . . . well, it's . . . the way Americans live . . . strong, rich, self-confident." Even Saya's teacher, Mrs. Nakarai, who transforms almost overnight from a cruel and fervent disciple of the emperor to a fawning partisan of the one Christian girl in the class, and indeed of all things Western, misapprehends the meaning of the new buzzword, "freedom." Its ideogram in Japanese unites "self" and "relationship," and Mrs. Nakarai concludes: "A person who relates everything to himself . . . is free."

The novel is replete with such telling cultural details; the shock of General MacArthur's wearing sunglasses (reserved only for the blind in Japan), or of the emperor's appearing in a newspaper photograph with one leg placed a few inches before the other, "contrary to accepted custom. One could actually sense that a new era had dawned." We even hear the clamor of tin cans in the wind as a distinctly postwar phenomenon: they are hung to frighten away sparrows while sweet potatoes, precious in a time of food shortage, are dried on the rooftops.

And yet it is Saya's personal struggle to love and be loved by both of her parents that makes *Cranes at Dusk* more than sensitive sociology, and lends it shape and pathos. Her father, the Shinto high priest or Guji, is revered by everyone but his bitter and disillusioned wife. One can easily deduce that in the Guji's wide search for truth (he is an expert on the I Ching, a study that led him to predict Japan's defeat, and despite his quarrels with Christianity encourages Saya to take English and Bible lessons), he represents the flexibility of the new Japan. Saya's mother can be seen to symbolize the rigidity of the old Japan—of her beloved tea ceremony, for instance, no longer a peaceful and unpretentious art. Yet both parents' characters are drawn with some white space around them, room for complexities unspoken but implied. And Saya's attempt to learn from her soft-spoken father, without antagonizing a mother who seeks relentlessly to turn her against him, indicates a torment that belongs not only to children; in fiction as well as life, it is the sort of problem that "builds character."

Just as the Guji is beginning to seem a little too perfect—he even corrects birdsongs, exhorting a nightingale to "practice more"—we learn that he has failed in his I Ching predictions to foresee a death in the family. Saya pays her respects at the gravestone, and when she is drenched in the rain a Buddhist monk lends her his robe. She "puts on" the knowledge of death—for to the Japanese, Buddhism rather than Shinto is the consolation for death. It is a touching scene, excelled only by the final one. The Guji, like the crane of a Japanese fairy tale who transports a child to the land where the sun never sets, carries Saya off on his back: "She could feel the pulse beating under his skin."

MARY JO SALTER

Mary Jo Salter's book of poems, *Henry Purcell in Japan*, has recently been published by Knopf.

CORRECTION

In Leon Wieseltier's piece "Brothers and Keepers" (TNR, February 11) Wolf Leslau's name was incorrectly spelled. Apologies.

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THE NEW REPUBLIC'S BEST BOOKS

Following is a list of books TNR *has recently reviewed and recommends.*

The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam by Said Amir Arjomand (University of Chicago Press). An informative study of the relation between religion and state in Iran and Islam. (Reviewed 2/25/85)

The Painting of Modern Life: Paris in the Art of Manet and His Followers by T. J. Clark (Knopf). An original study of a decisive turning point in the history of art. (2/18/85)

For the Common Defense: A Military History of the United States of America by Allan R. Millett and Peter Maslowski (The Free Press). A superb single-volume survey of American military policy. (2/11/85)

Equal Distance by Brad Leithauser (Knopf). An accomplished novel about Americans in Japan. (1/21/85)

White Noise by Don DeLillo (Viking). A novel of fear and trembling and technology in Middle America. (2/4/85)

The Willowbrook Wars: A Decade of Struggle for Social Justice by David J. Rothman and Sheila M. Rothman (Harper & Row). A chronicle of one case at the heart of the de-institutionalization controversy. (2/4/85)

The Second Industrial Divide: Possibilities for Prosperity by Michael J. Piore and Charles Sabel (Basic). An original account of an industrial turning point. (1/7&14/85)

The Intellectual Follies: A Memoir of the Literary Venture in New York and Paris by Lionel Abel (Norton). The life and times of the literary-political-Jewish intellectuals from 1930 onward. (2/11/85)

The Burn by Vassily Aksyonov (Random House). An epic portrait of the landscape of Soviet life. (12/31/84)

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

Free Lunches

FORMER BUFFALO BILLS Q.B. Jack Kemp came by TNR for lunch the other day, with his brand-new press secretary, John Buckley, beaming at his side. Around Washington, the word is that the competition between Kemp and George Bush for the services of Buckley, the brightest young light in the Reagan reelection campaign, was the first event of Campaign '88. Others may disagree, but I say that Kemp's victory in the Buckley primary gives him a major advantage over Bush, in Big Mo terms. Kemp was the second-most bejeweled TNR lunch guest I can remember—the first being United Food and Commercial Workers union president William Wynn, who showed up wearing enough gold to disrupt the Eurodollar market. On one hand Kemp sported the diamond-studded ring he got for being elected to the Pro Football Hall of Fame; on the other glittered an equally imposing "NFL Man of the Year" bauble. But as a Kansas City Chiefs fan who still remembers the glory days of Lenny Dawson and Otis Taylor, I was sorely disappointed that Kemp chose not to wear the ring he got for winning a championship in the old American Football League. Now *that* would have been something to see.

OF COURSE, the congressman had come to talk politics, not sports trivia. And talk he did—racing through his pitch for the Conservative Opportunity Society as if we had no time-outs remaining. Shoulders bobbing, hands somersaulting in the air, Kemp comes across as almost as much of a whirligig as Bush. Unlike Bush, however, Kemp seems animated by ideas and principles that he actually believes. Some of these, like the view that the Republicans can and should do more to win the votes of low-income voters and blacks, seem to merit Kemp's enthusiasm. Others, like going back to the gold standard, or curing the deficit painlessly through economic growth, do not. The only thing I really can't understand is Kemp's disdain for asking citizens to make sacrifices for the public good. When I suggested that a military draft or mandatory national service might instill a useful feeling of social solidarity in American youth, Kemp looked at me as if I'd just stepped off the campus of a Prussian war college. "I don't see why the government has any claim on the lives of its youth," he said. "At the age of 18, you should be focusing on your dreams and ambitions, not picking up cans in Yellowstone!"

ONCE AGAIN, President Reagan has placed the blame for the current $200 billion deficit on his predecessors—particularly his immediate one, Jimmy Carter. In a recent interview with *The Wall Street Journal*, Reagan said: "The first of those major big deficit increases occurred after I was in office. However, it was not my responsibility because your first eight months in office, you're on the other fellow's budget . . . when the bottom fell out of the economy in July of '81, not one facet of my economic program had been passed as yet. So it couldn't have had anything to do with that deficit." Well, the Congressional Budget Office recently estimated what would have happened in the last four years if we had stayed with the tax and spending policies embodied in "the other fellow's" 1981 budget. There still would have been a recession in 1982, but by now the deficit would be only 1.9 percent of GNP—not 5.3 percent. If we'd stuck to a Carter-style policy even longer, CBO estimates, by 1989 we would have a small budget *surplus*. Instead, unless something drastic is done, Reagan will bequeath to the nation a deficit equal to five percent of GNP when he leaves office—exactly two-and-one-half times as large as Jimmy Carter's last deficit.

WHY ON EARTH (pardon the expression) is the Reagan administration asking for an $80 million dollar increase in budget authority for a manned space station? Reagan offered this vaulting explanation in his State of the Union address: "In the zero gravity of space, we could manufacture in 30 days lifesaving medicines it would take 30 years to make on earth. We can make crystals of exceptional purity to produce super computers, creating jobs, technologies, and medical breakthroughs beyond anything we ever dreamed possible." The station is supposed to be in orbit by 1992; if everything goes according to plan, it will cost eight billion dollars. But when I called NASA spokesmen to ask exactly how many jobs and which medical breakthroughs we could expect from the station, and when we could expect them, they were vague. The best-known zero-gravity drug-making process is something called electrophoresis, which has been tried out in the Space Shuttle. But as Tina Rosenberg pointed out recently in these pages, electrophoresis would work better on a cheaper unmanned space platform—of the kind private companies are already developing on their own ("Mission Out of Control," TNR, May 14, 1984). The manned space station is basically a subsidy to businesses that want to use zero gravity to develop products but would never risk building a station of their own. This may or may not pay off for the country. But before we go spendng a lot of money, let's can the Space Cowboy talk and have a careful accounting of exactly what we'll get out of it, and how soon, and an explanation of why there are no alternatives. That's no more than the administration would ask of people who want to spend taxpayers' money on terrestrial commercial projects—such as, say, synthetic fuels—which also claim to create new jobs and promote new technologies. It's going to be pretty hard to liquidate this investment once it goes into orbit.

AMERICA'S NEW U.N. ambassador, General Vernon Walters, seems to agree with David Stockman's views about military pensions. One of the military retirement system's more inequitable foibles is that it dishes out benefits to retirees who are still young enough to take well-paying jobs elsewhere. Walters retired from the Army in 1976, but in 1981 he began a second career as the Reagan administration's ambassador-at-large. All the while, Walters has been collecting a completely indexed pension, which has now reached $40,000 a year. Scandalous, no? Wait a minute. Walters asked the military to cut his pension off when he went back to work, apparently in the astonishingly noble, and absolutely correct, belief that taxpayers shouldn't be supporting him when he's perfectly capable of supporting himself. The Army refused, telling Walters that there were "no provisions in the law" to deal with his request. One can only assume that this is because such requests are so rare. According to an aide, Walters now gives a big chunk of his pension to charity.

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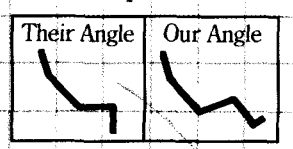

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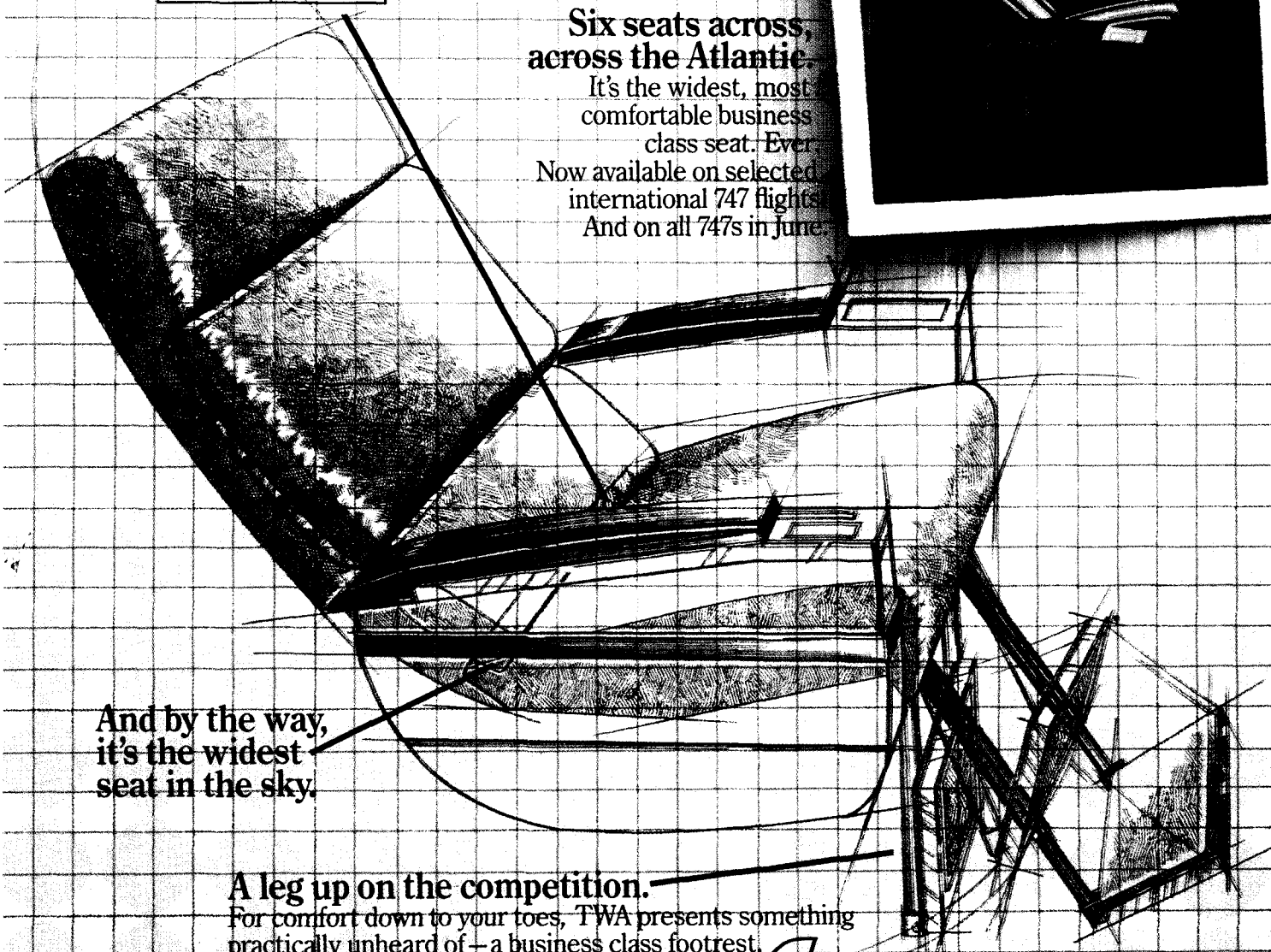

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